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# THE VEDANTA KESARI

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Hindu Ethics ... ..	321
The Spirit of Indian Nationalism <i>By the Editor</i> ... ..	322
Half an Hour with Swami Vivekananda <i>By Prof. K. S. Ghosh, M. A.</i> ... ..	327
Spiritual Awakening in India <i>By Sir Francis Younghusband</i> ... ..	331
Conversations of Swami Shivananda <i>By A Disciple</i> ... ..	336
The Ethical Side of Spinoza's Philosophy <i>By Prof. Sheo Narayan Lal Shrivastava, M.A.</i> ... ..	339
The Spiritual Doctrine of Father Louis Lallemant <i>By Wolfram H. Koch</i> ... ..	341
Scientist and Seer <i>By Sister Devamata</i> ... ..	348
The Narada Bhakti Sutras <i>By Swami Thyagisananda</i> ... ..	350
Reviews and Notices ... ..	354
News and Reports ... ..	355

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Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman" — Swami Vivekananda

# THE VEDANTA KESARI

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## HINDU ETHICS

दत्तानुकीर्तिर्विषमः क्षुद्रो नैकृतिकः शठः

असंभोगी च मानी च तथा सङ्गी विकन्त्यनः ।

धर्मशीलं गुणोपेतं पाप इत्यवगच्छति

आत्मशीलोपमानेन न विश्वसिति कस्यचित् ।

परेषां यत् दोषस्त्यात्तद्गुह्यं संप्रकाशयेत्

समानेष्वेव दोषेषु वृत्त्यर्थमुपघातयेत्

तथोपकारिणं चैव मन्यते वञ्चितं परम्

दत्त्वापि च धनं काले सन्तपत्युपकारिणे ।

भक्ष्यं पेयमथालेखं यच्चान्यत्साधुभोजनम्

प्रेक्षमाणेषु योऽश्नीयात् वृशंसमिति तं वदेत् ॥

Some people repeatedly talk about the gifts they have given. Some are characterised by partiality and meanness. Some are cheats in the garb of friends. Some pretend poverty when they are well off. Some are too miserly to enjoy their own possessions. Some are proud and doggedly attached to objects. Some are braggarts. Some readily impute vice to virtuous persons, taking themselves as the criterion, and never trust anybody. Some declare abroad the unobserved shortcomings of others although they themselves are victims to the same and throw obstruction in the way of their livelihood. Some there are who cleverly think that they have imposed on the person who has in time met his urgent need. Still there are others who partake drinks, delicacies and jellies under the eyes of others without sharing with them. All these are to be marked out as *nrishamsa*, wickedly cruel.

Mahabharata, Shanti Parva, Ch. 162, verses 5, 8, 9, 10 & 11.



# SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

*By Swami Saradananda*

[Men of high spiritual attainment, while manifesting extraordinary powers, at the same time resemble little children in many respects. The incidents narrated below show how these two aspects of personality were harmoniously combined in the Master.]

## *The unique relation of Mathuranath with the Master*

THE relation that the Master established with Mathuranath was thus both sweet and intimate. It was undoubtedly due to the Master's unconditional mercy on him that Mathuranath's love for him increased day by day until he began to look upon him as his very life and soul. Not a little of the attraction he felt for the Master was due to the latter's child-like state of mind. For, where is the man whose mind is not drawn towards a child inexperienced in all worldly matters ; who does not watch its sweet and purposeless activities with concern and hasten to its protection whenever it is about to harm itself due to its absorption in play ? Moreover, there was not the slightest trace of affectation in the Master's child-like behaviour. While in that attitude, he would actually appear to be a boy who was unable to protect himself. Therefore there is no wonder that Mathuranath, possessed of power and intelligence as he was, would spontaneously feel an impulse to protect him in every way. Hence, while on the one hand he relied upon the spiritual powers of the Master, on the other hand he was ever ready to protect the Master, knowing him to be an inexperienced child. Finding in the Master this unique combination of the attitude of the omniscient Guru and that of an ignorant child, Mathuranath probably came to the conclusion that he was to protect the

Master in all worldly matters including the preservation of the Master's body, while with regard to the subtle spiritual matters which are beyond the pale of the senses and control of human beings, the 'Father' was destined to be his protector. Just as the Master's character was complex, being the meeting-ground of such opposite traits as humanity and divinity, ignorance and omniscience, even so was Mathur's love for him correspondingly complex in form. Mathuranath no doubt adored the 'Father', who was established in Bhava-mukha (the spiritual state that unites the dual and non-dual planes of consciousness), and who could bestow boons on people and remove their fears ; yet the same 'Father', while in the mood of a child, would be so simple and dependent in nature that he had to be soothed and consoled by him on various occasions. In such situations Mathuranath, out of love for the Master, would resourcefully invent suitable explanations for the Master's questions.

## *Mathuranath consoles the child-like Master by his invention of 'the worm of lust'*

One day, while engaged in conversation with Mathuranath, the Master suddenly went out, and returning with a melancholy face, inquired of Mathuranath, "What is this disease that I have got ? I found something like a worm going out through the

urinary passage. None has got this kind of worm in his body. What is this due to, then ?" The same 'Father', who perhaps a moment ago was giving extraordinarily simple explanations of abstruse spiritual truths, is now for nothing overwhelmed with great anxiety and stands in need of the advice and consolatory words of Mathuranath ! "It is very good, indeed, Father !" came the prompt reply of Mathuranath. "Everyone has got within himself the 'worm of lust' which gives rise to various evil thoughts and deeds. Now, through the grace of the Divine Mother it has gone out from your body. Why do you worry so much on this account?" At once like a boy the 'Father' felt great relief and said, "Quite true. I am very fortunate indeed to have consulted you !" and began to express his delight over this matter.

*The Master's conversation with  
Mathuranath regarding the  
coming of his future  
devotees*

One day, in the course of a conversation, the Master told Mathuranath, "The Mother has convinced me through repeated visions that there are many devotees 'of the innermost circle.' They will all come, get instructions from here, i.e., from the Master, regarding things divine and gain realisation. They will attain the highest form of devotion." And pointing to his own person he added, "Through this form the Mother will have much play, will bestow Her mercy on many. That is why she has not yet destroyed it. What do you say ? Are these mere hallucinations or are they genuine visions ?"

"Why should they be hallucinations, Father ?" replied Mathuranath.

"When the Mother has not shown you anything untrue till now, why will this vision alone be so ? It must also come true. But why are they, the future devotees, delaying ? Let them come soon so that I may enjoy their company."

The Father became at once convinced that whatever the Mother had shown him was true. Said he, "Well, I don't know when they are to come. It is the Mother who has shown all these things. Let Her will be done."

*An instance of the Master's child-like  
attitude : the incident of the  
picking of the greens*

Rani Rasmiani was without any male issue but had four daughters of whom the third and, after her death, the fourth and youngest one, were married to Mathuranath. The sagacious Rani allotted the shares of her property for all her sons-in-law even in her life-time, so that there might not arise any quarrel over the partition of the estate in future. One day, after the allotment of the shares, Mathuranath's wife went for bath to a tank which belonged to one of her sisters according to this partition. Noticing there a kind of greens growing luxuriantly, she collected some of them. The Master alone noticed her doing this, and at once various thoughts of the following nature began to agitate his mind : 'It was very bad on the part of Mathuranath's wife to have taken another's things in that way without the permission of the owner. She did not even consider that the taking of things in this manner without the owner's permission amounts to stealing ! Moreover, why should she have so much greed for others' things ?'

Meanwhile that daughter of the Rani, to whose share the tank belong-

ed, happened to meet the Master. At once he informed her of the conduct of Mathuranath's wife. This report of the Master, given in an extremely serious attitude, made it impossible for her to restrain her laughter. "Very true, Father," she commented, "she has done a great offence, indeed!" That very moment the culprit also personally appeared there, and after coming to know of the cause of her sister's laughter, herself joined in the fun saying, "Well, Father, is it fair on your part to have reported this incident to her? While stealing these greens I took so much care to escape her detection, and you have thus exposed me to my great shame!" Thus both the sisters began to laugh loudly. Still came the Master's reply, "When the allotment of the shares has already been over, it is not proper thus to lay one's hand on another's property. That is why I brought it to her notice so that she might settle the matter with you." This statement of the 'Father' increased their laughter all the more, and filled them with wonder at the Master's extraordinary simplicity.

*Mathuranath takes refuge in the  
Master in times of family  
calamities*

On the one hand the Master was a simple child as shown above; on the other he was the saviour of Mathuranath at critical moments. The following is an event illustrating the latter point. In connection with a conflict with another zemindar, Mathuranath gave orders to his men to fight with clubs, and this resulted in loss of lives. In great distress Mathuranath approached the 'Father' seeking his protection. At first the 'Father' became very much annoyed and scolded him severely. "You fool,"

said he, "You will create troubles every now and then and come to me for protection! What can I do? Go, and save yourself now. What business have I with these things?" But later, on account of the persistent importunities of Mathuranath, the Master said, "Let the Mother's will be done." In fact Mathuranath was saved from that trouble.

*An instance of the miserly Mathuranath spending money lavishly for the Master's sake*

Numerous instances may be cited which show this dual aspect in the Master's character. It was by observing these various attitudes of the Master that Mathuranath had the firm conviction that all he possessed, wealth, honour, power and what not, was through the grace of the 'Father.' Therefore there was nothing strange in Mathuranath's unflinching faith in, and regard for, the Master as an incarnation of God. The intensity of devotion in a man of wealth may be fairly guessed from his expenditure of money for the sake of his object of devotion. Moreover this test is specially applicable to Mathuranath who was miserly also to some extent, as clever and calculating rich men are generally found to be. That Mathuranath's faith and devotion sprang directly from his heart becomes quite evident from his lavish expenditure for the Master's sake. He would have the Master gorgeously dressed and seated to witness the performance of religious dramas with one hundred rupees or more arranged in rows of ten in front of him, so that he might reward the distinguished performers with it. In the course of the performance he would perhaps get into an ecstasy on hearing some touching song

or recital and push the whole amount kept before him towards the performer as his reward ! But Mathuranath would not at all be vexed on this account. He would rather express his delight saying, "The reward is just in keeping with the 'Father's' generous mind," and have an equal amount arranged again before him. But in that ecstatic mood of his how long would it remain before the Master who had completely rid himself of greed by practising to look upon a piece of gold as identical in value

with a lump of clay ? Perhaps this newly placed amount would be disposed of in the same manner under the intoxication of a fresh wave of emotion. Later, finding no money at hand he would perhaps give away his shawl and other costly garments, and thus stripped to the skin, sit motionless, and deeply absorbed in a state of ecstasy. Mathuranath would on such occasions go mad with joy considering that his money had been used in the best possible way.

## AN ANCIENT MESSAGE TO THE MODERN CONSCIENCE

[An attempt is made in the following paragraphs to make a general review of Buddhist thought with a view to extract from it what might possibly have been the universal message of the Buddha to mankind.]

### A Gospel of Love

**T**HE full moon of Vaisakh which falls in this month is a day of consecration and rejoicing to a very large section of humanity. For it is a thrice blessed day, being the anniversary of the birth, enlightenment and final Nirvana of Gautama Buddha whose life and teachings have been a blessing and an inspiration to countless men and women for more than two millenniums.

The rise and spread of the great world-religions all the world over constitute some of the most heroic and sublime chapters of human history. They reveal the possibilities of human nature when it is thrilled by a soul-stirring faith ; they record the achievement of man in his effort to reach out from animality to Divinity. But it so happens that when the foundations of human nature are shaken by a deep emotional upheaval, it is not only its nobler aspects that

find expression but also the cruder traits that lie dormant in it. Hence we find that when the religious spirit of human societies is enkindled into a mighty flame, it is usually encrusted by a smoky film of narrowness, bigotry and unhealthy spirit of aggression. Such at least has been the case in the rise and spread of some of the great world-religions like Islam and Christianity. It is difficult to adjudicate whether their phenomenal success in early days is more due to the holiness of their saints and the zeal of their missionaries, or due to the sword of their kings and the aggression of the priesthood. It is, however, the great glory of the religion of the Buddha that it won about a third of humanity into its fold without shedding a single drop of blood or violating the conscience of any man. The Buddha, it is said, was born in this world to remove the sufferings of men ; and his followers, whatever their

faults in other respects, always kept this in view ; and never did they stoop, in the course of their world-wide propaganda, to the expediency of force in preference to the principles of their compassionate Master. They have ever been free from the sophistry and hypocrisy of the organised priesthood of some other religions, who thought it an act of great mercy to rescue heretics from the eternal torments of hell through the short-lived pangs of earthly fire.

### **The Message : Dhamma as Deity**

What did the Buddha teach ? What was his saving message to mankind ? On this question there has been no unanimity of opinion ever since the Great Council was held about two centuries after the Buddha, when the then existing eighteen sects of Buddhists grouped themselves under two main schools—the Theravadins (Sthaviravadins) or followers of the doctrine of the Elders who maintained the orthodox tradition now preserved in the Pali Canon, and the Mahasanghikas or adherents of the Great Council who developed later into the diverse sects of Buddhism called Mahayana. The numbers of Buddhist sects are to be counted to-day in hundreds. A brief reference to the beliefs held by some of them may not be out of place here. There are the Theravadins, otherwise known as Hinayanists, who hold to the Pali Texts which are claimed to contain the pure teachings of the Buddha. They teach a sort of philosophy which perceives in this world a vale of misery, and in man and the universe a constant flux having no permanent substratum. The human personality is a composite stuff. There is neither a soul nor a God. The goal of man is to get out of the

recurrent cycle of life and death by seeking the extinction of personality in Nirvana. This is to be achieved through the practice of certain moral virtues and an abstract analysis of personality with a view to realise its unsubstantiality. Till recently these teachings of the Pali Books were supposed to embody the genuine gospel of the Buddha, although many non-Buddhists and non-specialists in Pali did doubt their genuineness and see a positive content even behind these negative teachings. The researches of Mrs. Rhys Davids have, however, confirmed the doubts of non-Buddhist admirers of Buddhism. She has shown that the Pali Canon is not so immaculate a piece of work, that it has undergone a good deal of additions and emendations at the hand of monastic editors and that the original teachings of the Buddha are far different from the generally accepted principles of Theravada. She has pointed out that the message of the Buddha is not a pessimistic gospel of riddance, but a dynamic teaching of hope and cheer for Everyman. He taught the Middle Way, the Bhavammagga or the Way of Becoming which consists in man "becoming ever better, ever less imperfect, ever narrowing that gap between man as he is and Man-in-the-Highest. Desire to become, Will to become, using body, sense and mind in the quest, is necessary ; necessary, too, the guiding rein, the curb, the whip of rule and discipline and training. Following neither 'end' alone, nor to excess, by this midway of becoming shall the pilgrim to the topmost height fare on." He disputed neither the existence of the soul nor of the Deity. Anatta is not soulless but not-the-self, and it is spoken only of sense experi-

ence and not of the essence of personality. There is a More in man and his goal in life is to develop that to its fullest possibilities. "You are not just being," he taught, "You are becoming; your becoming is that growing within you; your becoming is a matter, not a ritual of just knowing; it is your very living. In the other man that too is becoming. You are each and all in the long way of becoming toward That Who you are." The goal towards which man is developing is the Immanent Deity, and it is this Deity immanent in man that the Buddha denoted by the term Dhamma. Hence the essence of the Buddha's teaching, as interpreted by Mrs. Rhys Davids, is nothing but the manifestation of the Divinity in man.

### **The Doctrine of the Three Bodies**

This identification of the Deity with the Dhamma receives weighty sanction when we consider the later developments of Buddhism as embodied in the Mahayana. Later, they are called only because these teachings became widely popular several centuries afterwards. That they existed from very early days is shown by the presence of the Mahasanghikas, to whom we have made reference before. In these developments of Buddhism we find the faith transformed from a soulless and godless system of ethical discipline and mental analysis into a complicated form of theism that fully satisfies the devotional needs of the religious mind. We find here that the reality of the Buddha is something more transcendent than the earthly historical figure of the Sakya-muni. From very early times it was believed even by primitive Buddhists that after the passing away of the Buddha he lived in the Dhamma. It

was also believed that many Buddhas had appeared in this world from time to time to minister to the spiritual needs of man, and that the Dhamma they all preached was not different from one another but the same. If there is, therefore, unity in the Dhamma preached at various times, it is natural to suppose there is also a unity in the personalities of the teachers, the various Buddhas. If truth is immutable, those who reveal it are not many but one. This unity was effected by the doctrine of the Trikayas or 'three bodies'. According to this theory the earthly Buddhas lose their importance considerably and become subordinate to the conception of Dharmakaya or "body of law". What is called Dhamma in the Pali books is, in the light of this theory, not merely an abstract law, but the sum and substratum of all existence, the Tathata or 'trueness' which is the inner essence and support of the whole universe. It is that which lies beneath all phenomena but continuously manifests itself through them. It is identical with supreme enlightenment or Perfect Knowledge. According to this doctrine all the Buddhas that have appeared in this world are not different personalities but in essence identical, being the manifestations of the one and eternal Dharmakaya. The Dharmakaya is world-transcendent, but it expresses itself from time to time for short periods as Nirmanakaya "creation-body." The earthly Sakyamuni is only one of the many such visible manifestations of the transcendent Buddha by virtue of his wondrous, illusory power. There is yet another body of the Buddha in contrast to these temporary historical manifestations. This is the Sambhogakaya or

the enjoyment-body, which is a rather vague conception standing for the redemptive activities of the Buddha in the various spheres of the universe. While he is preaching in one sphere he is eternally active in all the various spheres of the universe as the perpetual organ of Revelation—as the innumerable Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of glorified bodies who have gained perfection through a long course of self-denial or who, though entitled to perfection, have spurned it with a view to help the suffering beings. We shall not attempt here to describe the complicated implications of the terms 'Buddha' and 'Bodhisattva', but only remark that both these are stages of spiritual development capable of being achieved by all human beings through proper effort. In the conception of the Sambhogakaya an attempt is made to reconcile the idea of Buddhahood as something won as a result of age-long effort with the notion of it as an eternal and infinite energy working as a perpetual organ of Revelation and Redemptive Love.

### **The Doctrine of the Adibuddha**

We come across a further attempt at systematisation of Buddhology with pronounced leanings towards theism in the conception of Adibuddha. The Adibuddha or Paramadibuddha, though conceived as issuing from Sunyata (void), is yet unoriginated and beginningless. He is pure Light, exists by himself and has never been seen. By five acts of contemplative power he has created the five Dhyānibuddhas (Buddhas of contemplation)—Vairocana, Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha and Amoghasiddha. By the twofold power of knowledge and contemplation, these in turn have given birth

to the Dhyāni-bodhisattvas (Bodhisattvas of contemplation)—Samantabhadra, Vajrapāṇi, Ratnapāṇi, Avalokiteśvara or Padmapāṇi and Viśvarūpa respectively. These are the creators of the world. The present creation of which we form a part is the work of Avalokiteśvara, the fourth Bodhisattva, and the Dhyānibuddha Amitabha is its protector. This universe has had for its earthly instructor Śākyamuni, the fourth of the human Buddhas. There are five earthly Buddhas corresponding to the five Buddhas of contemplation. The earthly Buddhas are not, however, incarnations, but reflexes (Pratibimbās) or magical projections (Nirmanakāya).

### **Arhat, Bodhisattva and Buddha**

We have referred above to some of the diverse ramifications of Buddhist dogma only to show to the general reader that the soulless and godless gospel that generally passes for the Buddha's teaching has not been left unchallenged from early times by large sections of the great teacher's followers, and that the theistic developments of Buddhism, especially its conceptions of Adibuddha and the Dharmakāya, fully justify the contention of Mrs. Rhys Davids that Dhamma stood for immanent Deity in the original teaching of the Enlightened One. We of to-day do not stand in need of the complicated Buddhology described above. We have our own theologies, and feel no need or inclination to substitute them with any brand of Buddhology. Is there then any strand in the complicated system of religious and philosophical thought that has gathered round the Buddha which may be of universal appeal—a message which any spiritually-minded person can

gladly accept and profit by, whether he be a professed Buddhist or not? In the message of every World Teacher there is such a strain of teaching by virtue of which he gains recognition as a World Teacher, and the case of the Buddha too is not an exception in this respect.

The universal aspect of the Buddha's message can be best expounded by considering the significance of the three terms that stand for different grades of perfection in Buddhism—Bodhisattva, Arhat and Buddha. The Buddhahood, which is the peak of spiritual attainment possible for man, is the result of a long and strenuous process of discipline and self-sacrifice. An ordinary individual by following the system of moral and mental discipline preached by the Buddha can become an Arhat, a perfected being even in this life. Such a person having understood the secret of existence, attains Nirvana, and after the falling away of the body there is therefore no more birth for him. But there are persons of exceptional moral fervour who do not care for their individual salvation, but overcome by Mahakaruna (great pity) and Mahamaitri (great friendliness) for the suffering beings dedicate themselves to the work of redeeming them, even though individual salvation is of easy achievement for them. Gotama, the Sakyamuni, was one such. He had, according to the Buddhist scriptures, almost reached the state of an Arhat or perfected individual in a previous birth, and the eternal bliss of Nirvana was his for the mere choice. But out of pity for the world he renounced this goal of individual salvation, and took the vow that he would not enter into Nirvana until he had set mankind on the path of deliverance.

Individual salvation is comparatively of easy attainment, but the capacity to save the world is derived only by the tremendous moral and spiritual force derived from repeated acts of self-sacrifice. Since he who was to be the Buddha took upon himself the vow of world-deliverance in his birth as Bhikshu Sumedha, he entered on his series of life as the Bodhisattva—a long and strenuous period of discipline in which there was no thought of individual salvation or welfare but which was characterised by a supreme readiness to sacrifice all personal interests for the good of others. Men suffer heat and cold for selfish ends, would they not suffer the same for the sake of the world?—this was the motto of the Bodhisattva. He practised, as Bodhisattvas are expected to do, the ten Paramitas or transcendent virtues consisting of giving, morality, renunciation of the world, wisdom, energy, forbearance, patience, truthfulness, resolution, love and equanimity. Each of these virtues could be practised in three stages—giving, for example, from bestowal of alms, through the sacrifice of wealth and limb, to the surrender of child, wife or life. These previous lives of the Buddha as the Bodhisattva are recorded in the Buddhist books called the Jatakas, and it was by virtue of the spiritual energy generated by supreme self-sacrifice in hundreds of births as Bodhisattva that Gotama, the Sakyamuni, attained in his final birth the status of the Buddha or Enlightened One—a state that differs from that of the Arhat or perfected man in that the latter gives one the power of saving oneself alone while the Buddha by renouncing the idea of individual salvation gains the capacity to redeem the world. Thus according to the Buddha's gospel,



spiritual perfection of the highest order progresses from the discipline of Arhatship, through that of the Bodhisattva, to the state of the Buddha.

### **Two Views of Spiritual life**

In this unification of the dual ideals of the Arhat and the Bodhisattva in the conception of the Buddha is the universal message of Sakyamuni to humanity of all times. In this combination the Buddha has given an example as well as warning to all spiritual aspirants, whatever might be their religion or creed. Man's quest after salvation and spiritual perfection has run in two directions that look apparently opposed. There has always been one party that looks upon spiritual life as a purely subjective or internal process. They think of it in terms of a dive within, as an effort to reach at the inner essence of man through a process of meditation and mental analysis. The dynamic virtues of life are discouraged, and emphasis is laid more on the process of elimination rather than of enrichment. A withdrawal from life rather than participation in it, a retreat rather than an advance becomes the motto of the spiritual pilgrim. In staticity they see the ideal of perfection, and in movement nothing but a shadow of it—an erroneous perception that hides the face of Reality and has therefore to be negated by realising its illusory nature. Through withdrawal from all activities of life and practice of the perfect quietism of introspection they seek to achieve this goal. Among those who seek perfection through introversion, a very large number relapse into dullness and inertia and a good many become self-centred ego-

tists while a small minority develop into a type of static saintliness, full of peace within and capable of carrying peace to the few who may fall in with them in their line of thought. These perfected introverts are the Arhats, good in their own way, but not good enough for the world at large since they lack the dynamic spiritual energy of a Buddha which alone can make the saintly life significant and substantially contributive in the history of societies and nations. Their perfection is not all-sided. Much that is valuable in their personality is shrunken and undeveloped.

As distinguished from this type of introverts are the perfect extraverts for whom religion and spiritual life are understandable except in terms of social programmes. They see the external world in all its glory and in its imperfections, and feel that if there is any progress for them it is by participation in the joys and sufferings of their fellow-beings in whose midst they find their own life cast. Gregariousness is more predominant in them than the instinct of self-preservation. Abstract meditation and self-analysis fail to satisfy their heart's longing. Unless they are able to do something of tangible good to their fellowmen, be it feeding the hungry, nursing the sick, or educating the ignorant, they feel they have lived in vain. In actually contributing towards social good, towards the realisation of the 'good life' in society, are their joy and the fulfilment of their life. This type is the one that seeks development on the lines of the Bodhisattva ideal.

As in the case of pure introversion, the quest after perfection through a life of pure extraversion is also not without serious dangers. For it is

as much a lop-sided development as the other. Man is not purely a social being but a psychological being as well, and unless fertilised by the graces of contemplative life mere social activity remains barren of all spiritual results. For perfect selflessness in pure extraversion may be a theoretical possibility, but like many theoretical possibilities it is outside the pale of practical achievement. Hence just as the pure introvert generally ends by becoming a pure egotist due to the unhealthy 'self-fixation' involved in his discipline, so too the 'other-fixation' of the amateur world-saviour drives him gradually to be ubiquitous in the affairs of his fellow-men and finally end his life as a vainglorious individual who feels that he is the axis of the world. In these days when instances of this type are in abundance, we need not develop the point further here.

### **The Buddha's Contribution**

The message of the Buddha in its pristine purity is a warning to man in this respect. Buddhahood which is the consummation of all spiritual striving is not to be attained merely by introspection or through mere service of fellow beings. It is an attainment born of a harmonious combination of both. The Arhat or the man of perfect introspection lacks the spiritual dynamism, the contagious influence of personality that is characteristic of the Buddha. Though he has gained inner tranquillity, his spiritual potentialities have not been fully developed. For this higher development he has to identify himself with the life and feelings of all living beings, and to that end he must undergo the discipline of the Bodhisattva which is one of repeated self-

sacrifice and self-denial. But the true Bodhisattva is not like our amateur world-saviours of to-day who seek development in external life but suffer from atrophy within. He is a man of deeply contemplative life, one who is on the way to be an Arhat, but yet spurns the bliss of individual salvation, overcome by a sense of utter dedication to the welfare of fellow-beings. The knowledge of Sunya, by which the Buddhists meant ultimate Reality, is at his command ; but he gives up absorption in it because that knowledge is in itself imperfect and ineffective unless it is enlivened by Maha Karuna (Great Pity) which establishes one in identification with the interests of all life. Thus the true Bodhisattva, the aspirant after the highest spiritual perfection, is one who seeks to harmonise the inner life with outer life, the cognitive powers with the emotive and conative faculties, one who tries to combine knowledge with love or who, in Buddhist mystical phraseology, mingles Pragna with Upaya. From this successful combination is generated the mighty world-shaking spiritual energy that is the Buddha.

### **Bifurcation and its Dangers**

In the life of the Buddha and his early disciples the twin conceptions of the Arhat and the Bodhisattva were integrated into a single ideal of spiritual perfection. But a time came, a bad time, indeed, judged by the results, when these ideals were bifurcated and set in opposition by the two main sections of Buddhists—the Hinayanists trying to specialise in the ideal of the Arhat and the Mahayanists in that of the Bodhisattva. This was an unnatural division, having no sanction in the life of the Buddha, and the consequence was

naturally disastrous. Self-salvation may be successfully followed by a few individuals, but when it becomes the ideal of a whole society or a nation, the natural consequence is the degeneration of spiritual life into sloth, idleness and passivity. This has been the fate of Hinayana with its uncompromising insistence on monasticism and self-salvation. The Mahayanists, however, erred on the other side. They despised the ideal of the Arhat and exalted that of the Bodhisattva. Man was asked to care only for world-salvation and never for self-salvation, and every tyro in spiritual life began his career with the high and grandiose aim of working for universal welfare without, however, taking much trouble to develop the spirit of non-attachment born of a contemplative life. What is worse they developed queer ethical doctrines which seem to exempt the Bodhisattva from the limitations of ordinary moral codes. The Bodhisattva, they stated, is daily making numerous sacrifices for the welfare of others, and therefore there is nothing he should not do, meaning thereby that the theory of Karuna gave them a blank charter for committing all kinds of heinous offences and violating all laws, human and divine. "As for those world-saviours who have originated the Bodhi mind and are established in Sambodhi, there is nothing that they are prohibited from doing," was a popular verse among the Vajrayanists, a set of the Maha-

yana. "Those actions for which mortals rot in hell for hundreds of years—by those identical actions the Yogi is liberated," was another favourite slogan of theirs. True to the conviction echoed in these verses, the Mahayana, especially in its Tantric form, produced veritable demons of lust and greed, and the work of world redemption ended in the promotion of sexual promiscuity, participation in the love-intrigues of degenerate courts, the cultivation of occult powers, the performance of the six cruel acts and a host of such nefarious activities that became the favourite occupation of Buddhists in later times. All this may be traced to the bifurcation of the ideals of the Arhat and the Bodhisattva.

In the spirit and history of Buddhism is a great lesson for modern humanity. Spiritual life is not merely working out of a programme of social upliftment, as many modern minds think. Nor is it pure self-absorption and a quest after self-salvation. Like a tree it has got its root in the mud and mire of society, but its branches and leaves are spread in the transcendence and illumination of God. To disconnect it with its social environment is as disastrous as it is to shut it off from illumination born of insight. Only when both these conditions are fulfilled does it produce a luxuriant foliage and plentiful fruitage of ideal characters. The Buddha's message of spiritual dynamism is nothing if not this.

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# REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

*By A Disciple*

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was both wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped like a goddess by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and way of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of every-day life.]

**I**N 1913, during the holiday of the Janmastami we, five brother disciples, went to Jayrambati. One of us took his young son along with him. We reached the Math at Koalpara in the evening. As we had only a few days of vacation, we did not like to spend the night at that Math. We set out for Jayrambati. Before we reached our destination, we were overtaken by a heavy rain. The night was pitch black. The road was filled with water and mud, and only with great difficulty we reached the village. As it was late at night we did not inform the Mother of our arrival. Next morning we went to see her, and told her of the inclement weather of the previous night. The Mother said, in a tone of reprimand, "Sri Ramakrishna has protected you. It was a dark night; there were snakes around. It hurts me to see you face such danger. One should not be obstinate."

Disciple: Mother, we were extremely eager to see you. We have only a few days of vacation, therefore we had to hurry up.

Mother: It is quite natural for you to do so, but it is painful for me.

Sister Sudhira, the late headmistress of the Nivedita Girl School, was then at Jayrambati. That day, at noon-time, the Mother sent for me and said "Sudhira will accompany you to the

railway station at Vishnupur. Be extremely careful on the way. Keep her carriage between your two carriages. You are all my people. I look upon you as my children."

Disciple: Yes, Mother. We shall take her with us and do exactly as you have asked us.

At supper-time, the Mother sat near us, and we began to talk about various things. Referring to the initiation of the young boy in our party, the Mother said, "He is quite young now. It is too early for him to get initiation. The boy is a devotee. May he live long. May he serve other devotees." The Mother asked me to help the boy with his food. In the course of our conversation I asked the Mother, "I eat everywhere. Is it bad for me?"

Mother: Sri Ramakrishna insisted the devotees not eating the food of the Sraddha ceremony. That is an obstacle to devotion. Through every work, no doubt, we worship God alone; but still he forbade the devotees to eat that food.

Disciple: What shall we do if it happens to be the ceremony of our relatives?

Mother: Well, how can you avoid that?

Next afternoon at about two o'clock, we went to see the Mother. She was seated on the floor. A few

days before there had been a terrible flood of the river Damodar. The Mother asked, "Are people suffering too much on account of the flood?"

I narrated to the Mother what we had heard about it from the newspaper report and other sources. She listened to everything attentively, and said with great compassion, "My child, do good to the world." At these words of the Mother, I prayed mentally for the privilege of serving God in the form of humanity; and as I was about to take leave of her, I heard her muttering to herself, "Money, money, money." I shuddered at these words. Perhaps she had noticed my emotion and therefore spoke as she did. She looked at me and said, "Yes, child, we want also money. Look at my brother; he is always anxious to get money."

On the 24th of December in the year 1915, I went with my wife to the Udbodhan office to visit the Mother. My wife carried some sweets in her hand. Golap-Ma thought that she would offer them later on, and was about to keep them elsewhere when the Mother said to her, "Please offer the sweets, which my daughter has brought, to Sri Ramakrishna right now. She will gain some spiritual benefit from this." Next morning my wife went to Bhagbazar to see the Holy Mother and returned home in the evening. She said to me, "To-day the Mother was abundantly gracious to me. I will remember this joy all my life. At about ten o'clock in the morning she sat on the floor with some puffed rice and fried gram on the skirt of her cloth. She was eating one or two grains, while she handed them to me in large quantities. I have enjoyed many delicious foods in my life, but the joy of eating

this insignificant puffed rice with her was unparalleled. At noon-time she asked me to massage her feet, and also to air her bed. She has blessed me by accepting these little services from me. In the course of our conversation I said to the Mother, 'Mother, there is great suffering all over the country on account of this terrible war. The price of food and clothing has gone so high.' The Mother said, 'Still people cannot get over their foolishness.' I asked her if this war would do any good to our country. The Mother said in reply, 'Every incarnation of God is followed by such an upheaval. You will see that many such things will happen in future.'"

That evening, when we went to see the Holy Mother, she referred to our going to Jayrambati in that inclement weather, during the Janmastami vacation, and said again in a tone of reprimand, "One must not go anywhere in such an obstinate mood." I said, "No, Mother, I will not go any more." The Mother thought that perhaps I intended not to visit her again at her village. She said at once, "No, you must come there. But, my child, if a thorn pricks the sole of your foot, I feel the pain of a spear in my heart." The Mother said to my wife, "Dear daughter, please restrain his obstinacy."

In the year 1917, during the Durga Puja holiday, I went to the Udbodhan office with a brother disciple, to visit the Holy Mother. We took with us two pieces of cloth for her. We placed the cloth at her feet, and bowed down. The Mother blessed us and said, "Your pecuniary condition is not good. Why should you bring these cloths?" We were a little hurt at

this remark and said, "Mother, you have many wealthy children. They can give you costly cloths. We are poor, and have brought coarse things for you. Please accept these and fulfil our desire." The Mother said with great tenderness, "My children, these are as valuable to me as any silk cloth." She was suffering from a tooth-ache at that time. Referring

to it she said to us, "Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'One who has not experienced a tooth-ache cannot understand how painful it is.'"

In the summer of 1919, I went to Jayrambati and asked the Mother, "Does Sri Ramakrishna listen to our prayer?" The Mother said in an excited voice, "If he be real, he must listen to your prayer."

## THE PROBLEM OF EVIL IN DIVINE CREATION

*By Prof. Akshayakumar Banerjia, M.A.*

[Mr. Banerjia is the Professor of Philosophy in Anandamohan College, Mymensingh, Bengal. He tackles in this article the most vexed question in the philosophy of religion, namely, the problem of evil in a divinely constituted world-order. It is a question that has engaged the attention of the best thinkers from the very dawn of religious and philosophical thought but being one of those ultimate questions relating to the very foundations of life, it has never received a solution that will satisfy the intellect unamenable to the influence of faith. Nevertheless Prof. Banerjia's re-statement of the problem and the various solutions of it from different points of view together with his own suggestions for overcoming the difficulty will be found highly stimulating and instructive. The second part containing the writer's own solution of the problem will appear in the next issue.]

**C**ONTEMPLATION upon the wonderful order and adjustment experienced in all the departments of nature has led the religiously-inclined thinkers of all ages and countries to the inevitable conclusion that the world is created and sustained by the unlimited power of thought and will of one infinite, eternal, self-conscious, self-determined, self-existent Personality; and the testimony of our conscience, the possibility of the realisation of moral perfection in this world, the apprehension of a moral causation determining the courses, not only of the human but even of the physical events, have supplied them with a rational ground for regarding Him as a perfect moral Being,—for attributing to Him the moral qualities of justice, goodness, holiness, benevolence and mercy in perfection. This reli-

gious conception of the Universe has been echoed and re-echoed by the best minds of all races and communities. The Creator, Preserver and Governor of the phenomenal universe has been described by many as Absolute Love and by others as Absolute Bliss. This universe of bewildering diversities and complexities has been regarded as the product of His free act of self-enjoyment—His *Leela*. There is nothing which can escape His notice, nothing which can happen without His approval, nothing which is not the expression of His thought and will. He has created the world of finite spiritual and material beings from Himself, and all that actually exist or can possibly exist anywhere at any time in the universe must be looked upon as the expressions of His perfectly good and beautiful, perfect-

ly loving and merciful, perfectly wise and blissful, nature.

With all our reverence for the religious scriptures and the preachers of this beautiful conception of God and His universe, we are bewildered when we look at the other side of the picture, which presents itself to our experience, whether we will or not. When we direct our attention to the multitude of defects and disorders which are present side by side with the beauties and harmonies in the very constitution of phenomenal nature, when we think of the struggle for existence and the sufferings and agonies in the animal world, when we contemplate the indomitable passions and propensities which vitiate human nature and forcibly lead men astray from their cherished ideals, when we experience the oppressions of the weak by the strong, the trampling down of goodness by brute force, the apparent triumphs of vice over virtue,—the question automatically arises in our mind, can such a world be expected from a Supreme Person, who is perfectly good, loving, beautiful and blissful, and at the same time omnipotent and omniscient? How can these natural and moral evils, prevalent in all the departments of the world of our experience, be compatible with the character and power attributed to its creator and governor by the religious philosophers?

The problem assumes a gigantic and terrific form, when we actually witness such natural phenomena as devastated recently a large territory of Bihar and Nepal. Many towns and cities, which had developed in wealth, beauty and sublimity through the co-operation of man and nature in course of several centuries, were reduced to vast deserts and horrible

graveyards in the twinkling of an eye. Many flourishing villages associated with the memories of generations of men disappeared altogether under sand and water. Innumerable men, women and children, who had been dreaming of sweet and blissful future without the shadow of an idea that anything untoward might happen, were crushed to the most inconceivably painful death. Perhaps Nature bore an unsatisfied grudge against those who survived. She therefore sent cold waves and rains to torture those wretched human creatures, with bruised limbs and broken hearts, without food, clothing and shelter. The cries of agony and misfortune of the dumb creatures, possessing the feelings of pain and pleasure equally with men, were no less heart-rending. Can such phenomena be designed deliberately by a good and loving and wise Father?

Can we console our hearts by supposing that such calamities are rare on earth? Our experience gives the lie to such supposition. Earthquakes and volcanoes, storms, cyclones, and tornadoes, floods and droughts,—are not they found to disturb the harmony of the world's system and become sources of incalculable miseries to men and animals every now and then? Forces of nature appear to be always fighting with one another and creating havoc in the different parts of the universe. The elements do not seem to be disposed in the most advantageous manner. Orders and harmonies are being always disturbed. Many regions are being brought into existence only to be destroyed on the next occasion. There are many parts of the world, which are apparently sheer wastes in the creation. The opera-

tions of the forces and the distributions of matter do not seem to have any definite plan or any foreseen end. In the organic nature we find in the bodies of living beings some organs which do not appear to serve any useful purpose, and many important organs in the very constitution of which there are essential defects. Moreover, there are numerous abortions and monsters, which imply failures in the achievement of desirable purposes. Pain and struggle and mutual destruction are associated with the birth and growth of all living creatures. Are these indications of the infinite wisdom and power of a perfectly good and benevolent Creator ?

When we reflect upon the world of sentient creatures including men and all species of beasts, birds and insects, we find that it is a scene of hunger and thirst, violence and agony, terror and fear, disease and death, privations and bereavements, wars and destructions. No man, however, powerful, majestic and glorified, however beautiful, tender and attractive, is free from pain and suffering, free from the cruelties of nature. Every limb, every sense-organ, every faculty of men and animals are so constituted as to become in certain circumstances sources of trouble and misery. All sentient beings in general appear to be so created that they cannot live and grow without struggling with, inflicting pain upon and killing one another. They are born with pains to themselves and to their parents. They grow through pains of wants and appetites and incessant struggles against various hostile forces. There are audible or inaudible cries of agony everywhere in land and sea and air. It is with agonies that their life

begins and it is with agonies that it comes to an end. Can this be the dispensation of an infinitely wise, merciful and able Creator ?

In addition to these miserable conditions prevailing in inorganic, organic and sentient nature, we notice the moral evils arising out of the so-called abuse of the apparent freedom bestowed on the rational beings of the world. Along with this apparent freedom of will, such a variety of powerful passions and propensities are found inherent in human nature, that most men cannot but succumb to them and be compelled to do what their reason does not approve. The demands of sensuous life are in many cases so predominant as to turn reason and conscience into their slaves, and they are not unoften of such a nature as not to be satisfied without transgression of what reason recognises as moral laws. Thus there is an eternal conflict between the moral and the sensuous nature of man, and it is a source of agony to him.

The conditions of the world also do not appear to be favourable for the development of virtuous life. Virtue is not infrequently found to be rewarded with sufferings and indignities, and vice with honour and prosperity. History supplies ample illustrations to show that vice triumphs over virtue, that races superior in brute force domineer over, oppress and sometimes wipe out of existence races superior in moral and spiritual culture. In what is called "the state of nature" individuals are supposed to have been 'wolves' to one another, while in what is now called 'the civilised state' every nation is a wolf to every other nation. The stronger—whether individuals or communities or nations—are always seeking for an



opportunity to devour the weaker, and the weaker are waiting for opportunities to retaliate. Intelligence seems to have been given to man only to increase and intensify the sufferings of humanity and the animal creation. The havoc caused by the earthquakes, cyclones, epidemics, scarcities and other natural evils, sometimes appear to dwindle into insignificance in comparison with those caused by the great wars, which are not often created by the vagaries, vanities or stupidities of the few men who control the administrative machineries of different nations and whom people in their foolishness and helplessness worship as statesmen. Reason, with its grand discoveries and inventions, is found to serve like a slave girl the evil propensities of the powerful and unscrupulous men and created new fields of misery. If this be human nature and human destiny, are we justified in maintaining that the Author of this nature and the Ruler of this destiny is a supremely benevolent, perfectly rational and infinitely powerful Divine Being ?

Human reason finds itself in a very awkward situation from which it sees no way of escape. The inner demand of the moral and spiritual nature of the self impels reason from within to believe in the existence of an infinite, eternal, perfect, self-existent, moral and spiritual Personality creating and governing this finite, transitory, imperfect, phenomenal world of experience ; and this urge determines the outlook of reason so strongly that even the most uncompromising sceptic cannot but admit that 'a purpose, an intention, a design strikes everywhere even the most careless and the most stupid thinker' and that 'no man can be so hardened in absurd

systems as at all times to reject it.' On the other hand, when reason studies with open eyes the actual facts of the sense-experience, it is so overwhelmed by the natural and moral imperfections of the phenomenal world—by the natural catastrophes, the sufferings and agonies in the animal creation, the vices and inequities in the human society,—that it fails to reconcile these with the perfection and omnipotence of the Divine Creator. Various attempts have been made and are still being made for finding out some way of reconciliation, because so long as this is not found out reason feels a painful inconsistency within itself and gets no peace.

It has been maintained that the amount of evil is relatively insignificant in comparison with the amount of good in the universe. But who can ever measure the amounts of good and evil in the universe to prepare a satisfactory balance sheet ? Further, the estimation of phenomena as good and evil depends so much upon our subjective point of view, that an objective standard of measurement is scarcely available. The same conditions and the same forces of nature may be sources of happiness to some and misery to others, and to the same creatures they may be desirable from one point of view and undesirable from another. Most men have got this personal experience that many things which appeared to them as evil and ugly at one stage of their mental development were found to be of inestimable value when they learnt to take a deeper and more comprehensive views ; and the experience of a contrary character is equally common. Many elements in nature which were regarded previously as altogether evil are being discovered to

be sources of immense good with the progress of knowledge. Newer and newer sources of evil also are being discovered and invented. But whether good or evil predominates in the world cannot be known by means of any mathematical calculation from the materials within our experience.

Even if it be admitted that good preponderates over evil, the problem is not solved. Why should evil exist at all in a world created and governed by an omnipotent, omniscient and morally perfect God? Either He did not intend to create a perfectly good world, or He had not the power or wisdom to carry out His good purpose; that is to say, either He is not perfectly good or He is not infinitely powerful and wise. Such considerations led many thinkers to the conception of a *Finite God*. But in what respect He is finite,—in respect of morality or in respect of power and wisdom—is a matter of controversy among them.

Some classes of religious thinkers have maintained that the infinite goodness of God is beyond question, but in the determination of the characters of phenomena, His perfectly benevolent intentions are resisted and sometimes apparently baffled by another Power, called *Satan* or *Ahriman* or *Mara*; in the long run, however, the latter is defeated and the ideal of goodness is realised. This justification of the goodness of God does not seem to be quite satisfactory. If the Power of Evil is not His own creation, He is not the sole creator of the universe, and if He has created that Power also out of Himself, He cannot be acquitted of responsibility for the evils in the world.

Others, again, hold that to be finite and at the same time to be without

imperfections—without any moral or natural evil associated with it—involve a self-contradiction. We have got the best of all possible finite worlds. The imperfections are not in excess of what must necessarily exist in a world of finite beings. No body has ever been able to suggest any better scheme. The imperfections in the finite created objects do not, however, necessarily imply any imperfection in the creation. We might say that if God were essentially perfect in all respects, He should not have thought of creating any phenomenal world at all. But that is a different question, into which we have no right to enter here. If on some independent reasonable grounds we are led to conclude that this unitary system of the phenomenal world with its order and harmony and self-evolving, finite, moral and spiritual beings is produced by one infinite and perfect moral and spiritual Being, the presence of apparent imperfections,—natural and moral evils—in this world cannot prove that its cause also must be finite and imperfect.

Such special pleading in justification of the goodness and benevolence of the omnipotent and omniscient Author of the universe does not, however, appear convincing to many rationalist thinkers. Was creation a free act on His part or not? If not, He must be under some bond of necessity and cannot be regarded as a perfectly self-determined and self-realised spiritual Personality, nor the ultimate ground and cause of the universe. This would mean that He is not a perfect God. If He was free in His act of creation, did He not know that the creation of

a phenomenal world of finite moral and material beings would necessarily involve such positive miseries and catastrophes, vices and inequities? If not, He was not Omniscient. If He did, why did He exercise His freedom in creating and preserving

such a world at all? If it was not possible to create a world of virtue and happiness, unalloyed goodness and beauty, He might not will to create at all and might have eternally enjoyed the bliss of perfection in His own self.

*(To be continued.)*

## THE PARABLES OF BUDDHA

*By Swami Vividishananda*

[The Swami is the leader of the Vedanta Society, Washington, U.S.A. The following parables of the Buddha, adapted from The Gospel of Buddha by Paul Carus, will be read with interest on the occasion of his birth anniversary.]

**B**UDDHA, the Enlightened One, was the light of Asia and of the world. His life and teachings are a perennial source of inspiration and edification. To study them is like opening a perfume box and being enthralled by the sweet odours coming out of it.

The truth he lived and taught is attractive in the beginning, glorious in the middle and sublime in the end. It is excellent through and through, in spirit as well as in letter. But the masses could not very well understand and assimilate it because of its deep philosophy. So Buddha, full of love and consideration for the lowest of the low, came down to their level, adapting his thought to their thought and speaking their language. They were like unto his own children, and as children love parables he taught them in parables, illustrating great moral and spiritual principles otherwise hard to grasp, even as the other Enlightened Ones did before.

The parables of Buddha are simple, drawn from common life, but direct, appealing and meaningful. We take at random and present here a few of

these parables out of the many in order to show their beauty and simplicity and not to expound Buddha's philosophy systematically.

In days gone by there lived a well-to-do householder who owned a large but old mansion. It was so old that it looked as if it would come down any moment. Its rafters were worm-eaten, its pillars weak and rotten, its roof dry and combustible. And one day it so happened that the mansion caught fire to the dismay and consternation of the householder. Running outdoors he realised that his own dear children, ignorant of the danger, were playing and jumping around in the house which was ablaze.

Panick-stricken and distracted, he calmed himself and started thinking. To warn them of the danger from outside, he thought, would be useless. To run in and catch and carry them out would make the situation worse. For, some he might be able to get hold of while the rest would perish in the flames. Suddenly an idea flashed across his mind. "My children love toys", he thought, "If I promise them toys of exceptional beauty, they will listen to me."

Then he shouted aloud, "Children, come out and see what a feast of toys your father has for you. You have not seen their like before. Hurry, before it is too late!"

The word toy acted like magic, and lo and behold! the children ran in no time out of the blazing ruins. The father, beside himself with joy, took them in his arms and kissed them and rewarded them later on with multicoloured playthings of rare workmanship and beauty. The children in their turn understood the good intention of their father and appreciated the wisdom which was instrumental in saving their lives.

Buddha, likewise, kind and wise, knows that the children of the world love the tinsel of sense-pleasure. In order to win them over to righteous living, which is grounded in truth, he tells them of the bliss of Nirvana and saves them from the round of birth and death and its attendant evils.

We pass on to the next parable :

Once upon a time there lived a man, born blind, who moved in his own world without knowing anything of the visible universe of light, colour and form, so beautiful and grand. Naturally, he would not believe his friends who talked to him of the sun, moon and stars, of rivers, mountains and waterfalls, and of flowers and other attractive things the world possesses. To him they were illusions and he stubbornly clung to his idea in spite of the remonstrances of people.

A physician of unusual experience and wisdom fortunately dropped in and diagnosed the disease. He mixed four simples together and prepared a medicine which, administered at the right time and in the right dose, brought sight to the man born blind.

Buddha is the physician and the four simples are the four Noble Truths, namely, sorrow, sorrow's cause, sorrow's cessation and the way.

Now follows the third parable :

During the time when Buddha sojourned in this planet of ours, preaching his gospel, there lived in Sravasti, a man who inherited immense riches from his parents and lived an apparently comfortable life. But in spite of his wealth he knew not what happiness was, for he was suffering from obesity, excessive drowsiness and other annoying ailments.

Fortunately Buddha happened to be there at the time and the man out of desperation came to him and begged for a remedy.

Noticing the luxuries with which the man was surrounded, Buddha put to him this question : "My friend, you really wish to be cured of your ailments ? I know their cause." The man expressing his eagerness to be helped, the Blessed One said : "It is luxurious living that is the cause of your disease and corpulency ; drowsiness and pain are its symptoms. Exercise self-control when you eat, avoiding rich food. Give up love of sleep and hankering after pleasure. Use discrimination in everything you do and take upon yourself an honest occupation that will exercise your talents and make you useful to your fellow-men."

The man took the words of the Enlightened One seriously, following them to the letter. As a result very soon he recovered the lightness of his body and the health and vigour of youth. As a mark of gratitude he returned to Buddha and prostrating himself before his feet, said : "Master, you have healed my body.

Please do heal my mind by giving me enlightenment."

And Buddha said : " A man of the world nourishes the body at the expense of the soul. One who has better understanding and discrimination rather feeds the soul, enjoying peace himself and giving peace to others."

Next we tell the fourth parable :

When Buddha was living at Rājagṛha, practising austerities and struggling hard for the realisation of Truth, it was noised abroad that a holy man had come, whose equal very few had seen.

A simple woman who lived in the neighbourhood, earning her bread by the sweat of her brow, had a calamity. She had a child that was the pupil of her eye. One day as he was playing in the field while the mother was working, he unwittingly caught hold of a snake. The snake bit the innocent child and the venom worked instantaneously, leaving the little thing cold, pale and dead. The disconsolate mother went from place to place carrying her darling on her shoulder, but nobody could bring him back to life. At last she came to Buddha, and narrated her sad tale, begged the Master that the child, the only joy of her life, be revived.

Buddha did not know how to console the aggrieved mother. Full of the milk of human kindness, he was touched, and instead of telling the blunt truth, he adopted an ingenious way and said : " Mother, my heart goes out to you in your bereavement. Your child would live again if you could bring some white mustard seeds—just a handful. But mind, you have to get them from a family which has never known death." Full of hope the poor woman travelled from house to house, begging for the requir-

ed mustard seeds. All, in sympathy, wanted to help her if they could, but nobody could fulfil the condition. Everywhere she got one answer : " Alas ! The living are few, but the dead are many. Please do not remind us of our past grief. Where would you find a house that had no death ?"

Weary and broken-hearted, the woman sat down on the wayside and began to watch the city lights flicker up and go down till at last there was nothing but darkness. This phenomenon brought to her mind a picture of the fate of man. " The life of man also flickers up and extinguishes. In this valley of destruction nobody can escape death. How selfish am I in my grief to think that I am the only sufferer !"—she thought within herself. It was a great revelation. She forgot her grief and coming to Buddha took refuge in him.

Buddha while accepting her as a disciple said : " The life of every creature is brief and painful. He who is born must die. Death is inevitable. The way out is righteous living and spiritual understanding, which alone can insure peace and rest."

Our last parable :

Buddha was the embodiment of love and goodness. His rule in life was to conquer evil by good and hatred by love, and he taught the same to those who came to him for guidance.

Once upon a time he was talking to a mixed group, and the theme of his talk was something of a similar nature. " If a man unnecessarily hurts you by his thought, word or deed," said Buddha, " be sure that he does not know better. Without taking any offence return to him the protection of your ungrudging love. The more evil comes from him, the more good should go from you. In

the long run, you are the gainer. You get the fragrance of goodness, while the offending party the obnoxious air of evil."

An ignorant man who was present on the occasion wanted to test Buddha's patience and goodness. And he started abusing him mercilessly. Buddha listened without showing any sign of anger or disturbance. The man stopped after a while when Buddha broke the silence by asking him this question : " Son, if a man declines to accept a gift made to him, to whom would it belong ? " The man replied : " It would be his who offered it."

" My son," Buddha said, " You have abused me. I have the liberty to accept or reject. Suppose I ask you to keep it yourself. Who will suffer ? As the echo accompanies the

sound, and the shadow the substance, so misery follows the evil-doer."

The abuser seemed to be impressed and the Blessed One continued : " A man looking up and spitting at heavens is defiled by his own spittle. A man flinging dust at another when the wind is contrary is bespattered by his own dust. Likewise a slanderer or an evil-doer."

Naturally ashamed of his own conduct, the abuser begged the Master's pardon and took refuge at his feet.

The parables we narrated speak for themselves. The teachings of great men, although conveyed in different languages are the same in essence. They are universal and eternal. One cannot limit them by space or time, or monopolise them.

## HINDU CONTRIBUTION TO MUSLIM ARTS AND SCIENCES

*By Prof. M. A. Shustery*

[Mr. Shustery is of Persian nationality, and is the Professor of Persian in an Indian University. The following article from his pen is not a vague generalisation as is often the case with writings on subjects of this type, but a close and detailed study of the cultural contact between India and the Muslim world, especially from the point of view of translations from Sanskrit into Persian and Arabic.]

MUSLIM culture has been affected by Hindus through the following forms of contact : (1) through commerce which existed since time immemorial between India and West Asia ; (2) through Muslim scholars who visited India to study the Indian languages and philosophy ; (3) through Hindu scholars, travelers and captives, who during the rule of Umayyeds and Abbasides came in contact with Muslims ; and (4) through direct contact with Muslims when India was ruled by Arabs, Turks and Moghuls.

The first connection existed long before the appearance of Islam when Arabs of South and South-East Arabia and Persians had regular intercourse with the West India through the Persian Gulf and the Arabian sea. The following were the chief ports that formed the centres of Indo-west-Asian trade : (1) Ublah near modern Basrah ; (2) Syraf in Persian Gulf ; (3) Qays in Persian Gulf ; (4) Deyhal in Sindh ; (5) Thana near Bombay, noted for the manufacture of cloth ; (6) Khambayat noted for its shoes ; (7) Sanbarah

and (8) Jeymur, both in Gujarat ; and (9) several ports on Malabar Coast. Among Indian products, the chief articles of export into Arabia and Persia were the following : Cardamom, sandal wood, cloves, pepper, nutmeg, vitriol, deck, myrobalan, muslin, chintz, plantain, coco-nut, drugs, camphor, ginger, musk, etc. The last three have retained their Indian origin in Persian and Arabic languages and have been mentioned in Quran, as Kafur (Indian Karpur), Zanjabil (Indian Zanjabira) and Musk (Indian Mushka).

During the Umayyad rule, Sindh was conquered by Arabs and annexed to the Muslim Empire. A large number of Indians, both men and women, found their way to Damascus, the capital of Muslim Empire, as captives or visitors, and some of them settled down in Syria, Mecca, Madina, Kufa and Basrah. During the Abbaside rule, the capital was transferred from Damascus to Baghdad, which became the great centre of Muslim learning. Scholars from distant countries were invited. Among them, the following were Hindus :

(1) Manka (Manikya or Manick) noted physician and philosopher. He was well acquainted with Persian and Sanskrit and translated the books on poison, written by Shanuk, another Hindu scholar, into Persian. His first visit to Mesopotamia was during the reign of Harun-ur-Rashid, the famous Khalif. Learning the fame of the Khalif, he paid a visit to Baghdad and soon made himself popular and respected in learned society. He cured the Khalif from a disease which could not be successfully treated by the local physicians.

(2) Saleh, son of Bahlah, a great scholar in Ayurvedic sys-

tem of medicine. He became famous when he cured Prince Ibrahim (cousin of the Khalif) who was thought to be dead by other physicians, and was about to be buried. Saleh prevented the burial and treated and cured the apparently dead body. Afterwards he embraced Islam and lived in the high favour of the Court.

(3) Dhan, an Indian physician employed in Barmakiah Hospital of Baghdad. His son became the chief physician of the same hospital and translated a number of books from Sanskrit into Arabic.

(4) Shanak (Chanakya), a physician and philosopher. He was the author of the following, translated into Persian and Arabic : (a) The book of poisons in five discourses. This book was translated and commented upon by several scholars such as Manka, Abu Hatim, Balkhi (who wrote a commentary at the command of Yahya, son of Khalif) and lastly by Abbas, son of Saeed Jauhari ; (b) a book on astrology and astronomy, (c) another on morals, entitled Muntahul-Jawahar ; and (d) a fourth work on veterinary art.

(5) Kan-kah or Kan Kiraya, physician and astronomer, was the author of the following works, which were translated into Arabic : (a) Unnamudar fi A'mar or the Book on Age ; (b) Israr-ul-mawalid or the Secret of Nativities ; (c) Qirantulkabir and Qirantulsaghir or the Great and Small Cycles of the Year ; (d) Ihdasut-Alem vad-daur-e-fil-Qiran or the Beginning of the World and Revolution in conjunction ; (e) Kanash or the Book on Medicine ; and (f) Book on Mesmerism.

The Hindu scholars were divided into two classes—those who could not

write in Arabic and therefore had to be assisted by Muslim translators, and those who had studied Arabic and themselves did the work of translation. Jandar (Yodhara or Godhara), a Hindu scholar, wrote a book named Great Nativities or Mawalid-ul-kabir. Nahak or Nayak, Bazrigar, Bhakkar or Bhaskaracharya (the astrologer), and many others were Hindu scholars and authors who produced works on various branches of philosophy and medicine. Their names are quite Arabised. Most of them must have been natives of the Punjab and Sindh. Mohommod Zakariyya Razi, the famous Persian author, in his great work entitled "Al-Havi" has mentioned the work of Sirak or Charak, which for the first time was translated from Sanskrit into Persian, and the translation was commented in Arabic by Abdulla, son of Ali.

Among the important Indian works translated into Arabic are these : (1) Surya Siddanta on astronomy was popular among Muslim scholars, and through them it reached Spain and thence found its way to the interior of Europe. It was divided into four chapters. (2) Khandakhodyaka, also a work on astronomy. (3) Charak (Charaka-samhita) was translated first into Pahlavi and re-translated into Arabic by Abdulla, son of Ali. Charaka was a moralist, philosopher and the court physician to King Kanishka. The work Charaka-samhita consists of eight parts covering the whole field of medical science known in those days. (4) Sandhashan (?) or the Essence of Success, was translated by the son of Pandit 'Dhan' into Arabic. (5) Nidan, an important Indian work on pathology, which continued to be an accepted

authority by all later authors on the subject, contained diagnosis and treatment of all diseases known at that time. (6) Pancha Tantra and Hitopadesha were retranslated from Pahlavi into Arabic by Ibn-e-muquffa.

There are a large number of other Hindu works whose Indian titles are not known, such as, a work on drugs and herbs translated by Pandit Manka into Arabic ; on physiological effect of Indian medicines ; on female diseases, whose original author was an Indian lady ; two books on medicine by Pandit Navkashnal ; a book on pregnancy and female diseases ; a short treatise on drugs and herbs ; on intoxicants ; on causes of various known diseases, their treatment and names of drugs and herbs by one Raja Kurash ; on beverages by Pandit Itri ; a book named 'Satya' by Pandit Saobarna ; a book on palmistry and also one on omens ; a work entitled Sarpa Vidya (Arabic Optudia) by Pandit Roi on poisons of snakes ; another work on the same subject ; a work on food and poisons translated into Persian and re-translated into Arabic by order of Khaled-ul-Barnaki ; Nafir, the Arabic translation of a Sanskrit work on music ; and Arabic translations of parts of Mahabharata by Saleh, son of Shoaib. Pandit Bajhar or Bhakkar translated a number of Sanskrit works on politics, art of war and diplomacy into Arabic. There were Indian works on sword and its use, theories of State, Indian languages, rhetoric and so forth, which were translated into Arabic. Two works entitled the Wiles of Women by Raja Kosh and Buddhasattva which in Arabic came to be known as Buzasef were popular books among Muslims.



While the majority of Greek works were translated or re-translated from Syriac and Pahlavi into Arabic by Syrian Christians, works in Sanskrit were translated direct from the said language or retranslated from Pahlavi by Indian and Iranian scholars. The Abbasid Khalifs on the one hand invited Hindu scholars to their capital and on the other hand despatched Muslim students to India for the work of research. Among them were Abu-mansur-al-Muvaffaq, and Mohammed, son of Ismail Tanuki (9th century), a scholar in astronomy and astrology, who visited India to collect further information on the said subject.

The name of Susruta was known to Muslims in the 9th and 10th centuries as a great physician. Susruta and Charaka were translated into Persian and Arabic as early as 800 A.D. During the middle ages down to the 17th century Arabian medical science remained authoritative among European physicians and through Arabic works Indian medical writers also became known to the West. Besides Surya-Siddhanta, other Indian works on astronomy and astrology were also translated, and most probably the famous Hindu writers on the said subject, such as Varahamihira, Srishena, Aryabhatta, Brahmagupta and others were known to Muslim scholars. With the conquest of Sindh and the Punjab by Muslims, particularly after the repeated invasions of Sultan Mohammed, the Muslims came in direct and close contact with Indians, and by influencing each other the work of amalgamation of Hindu-Muslim culture progressed during the rule of the Khiljis, Tughluqs and Lodhis. Under Sikan-dar Shah, for the first time, Hindus

began to study Persian, which continued and reached its perfection during the rule of the Moghuls, when Persian was about to become the *lingua franca* of India. Among the famous Muslim scholars in Indian literature and philosophy is Abu Raihan-al-biruni, who studied Sanskrit and the vernaculars spoken in the Punjab. Biruni soon made himself known to Hindu learned men who gave him the honourable title of Vidya-sagar. His books contain valuable information on Indian philosophy, history, customs, etc.

The Indian works so far translated into Arabic were on medicine, astronomy, astrology, music, mathematics, fiction, moral stories and ethics but under Muslim rulers of India, from the time of Biruni, philosophy, mythology, history, religion and other subjects were also included among the translations. Amir Khusroe, the famous poet, who lived under the Slaves, Khiljis and Tughluqs, was one of the best scholars in Indian music. He knew Hindi as spoken in his time so well that he could compose verses in that language. Among the Slave rulers, Ghiasuddin Balbun and Nasar-ud-din Mohmmmed were patrons of learning. Feruz Shah found a large collection of Sanskrit books in Nagarkot and ordered some of them to be translated into Persian. Lodhi kings had Indianised themselves by adopting Indian language and customs. The example of the Lodhis was followed by the Moghuls, particularly by Akbar and his descendants. Emperor Akbar married a Rajput princess and his son Jehangir was half Rajput, who in his turn also married a Rajput princess, and his son Shah-e-Jehan was more a Rajput than a Moghul. Thus a Turko-Indian dynasty was

established in India. Pandits were asked to recite or read the Mahabharata, Ramayana and other legendary stories of India to the Emperors and princes. When the Muslim story narrators found that their royal masters were too much absorbed in Hindu fiction, they too wrote or narrated similar stories, in which the heroes are Muslims. Some of them such as Amir Hamza (uncle of the Prophet) are historical persons but their deeds are imaginary. These stories are published in huge volumes. They contain heroic deeds of Muslim princes and generals possessing extraordinary strength. They can defeat any number of men, Jinnies and Ifrits living on Mount Qaf. They subjugate fairies and marry them. They fight with infidels and always defeat them, break their idols and destroy all monuments of idolatry and magic. Magicians can perform wonders but even they are defeated and killed by Muslim heroes. One can detect in these books a great mixture of Indo-Iranian ancient myths. The spirit of the age is well represented in these writings. The stories narrated to the Moghul princes of Delhi and Nawabs of Lucknow expose to what extent Muslim aristocracy had degenerated during the 18th and 19th centuries A.D. Such are the voluminous and apparently absurd books entitled *Bustan-e-khiyal* and *Amir Hamza*.

Yogis and Sanyasis along with Fakirs and Pirs were held in respect and enjoyed private conversation with Moghul Emperors, ministers and nobles. Prince Dara Shukoh, son of Shah Jehan, was confident of gaining the throne because his "Guru" named "Sarmad" had predicted it. Unfortunately Dara Shukoh was defeated and slain by his brother

Aurangzeb who took revenge on Sarmad by causing him to be executed.

Among the celebrated writers of the Moghul period were the following : (1) Abul Fazl, minister of Akbar whose knowledge of Sanskrit and Indian philosophy was deep, and his work *Ain-e-Akbari* gives valuable information on Indian customs and history. (2) Faizi, elder brother of Abul Fazl, was a Sanskrit scholar. He versified the story of Nala-Damayanti into Persian. (3) Naqib Khan, assisted by Hindu Pandits, translated the Mahabharata into Persian. (4) Badayuni (Abdul Qadir) joined Naqib Khan in the work of translating Sanskrit works into Persian. (5) Haji Mohammad Sultan and (6) Mulla Shiri also translated the Mahabharata and named it "*Razim Nama*." (7) Girdhar Das, translated the Ramayana (for the second time) in 1626.

Prince Dara Shukoh was an enthusiastic student of Hindu philosophy. In 1657, assisted by a Pandit, he completed the translation of the Upanishads and named it *Sir-rul-israr* or *Sir-ul-akbar*, which means, Secret of the Secrets or the Great Secret. He also caused the translation of the Bhagavat Gita and Yoga Vasista. His other works are : (1) Dialogue between him and an ascetic named Baba Lal Das ; (2) *Safinat-ul-ouliya* and (3) *Majma-ul-Bahrain*, a comparative study of Vedantism and Sufism, completed in 1654.

While Muslims were engaged in the study of Hindu languages, arts and sciences, Hindu also seriously took up the study of Persian, which they continued even after the fall of the Moghuls and rise of the British Em-

pire. Among these Hindu writers in Persian, we have got the works of four poets and fourteen historians. From among these, the Persian poems of Munshi Chandra Bhan Brahman were incorporated by Saib, the great Persian poet, in his selections from celebrated Persian compositions. There were also several Hindu writers on literature, mathematics, fiction and other miscellaneous subjects.

The number of Hindu poets and authors in Urdu is so great that to mention their names is beyond the scope of this article. At least about seventeen Hindus have established reputation as either poets or prose

writers. Among Indian patriots and political leaders, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru are noted for their knowledge of Urdu and Persian literature.

It has also to be mentioned that while Muslims were influenced by Hindu culture, Hindu culture in its turn has been influenced by Muslim civilisation. All Indian vernaculars and Sanskrit itself contains borrowed Persian, Arabic and Turkish words. Among those sections of Hindus who came in direct contact with Muslims, there have resulted modifications even in their religious and philosophical outlook.

## A VEDANTIST OF ANCIENT CHINA

*By Swami Jagadiswarananda.*

[Swami Jagadiswarananda gives in the following article an account of the career and teachings of a great Taoist teacher of China named Chuang-tzu. He is called a Vedantist because of the striking resemblance of his ideal in life with the Vedantic view of life.]

**CHUANG-TZU** was a great Chinese sage who lived about two and a half centuries after Lao-tze, the first prophet and teacher of the ancient and indigenous religion of China known as Taoism. If Lao-tze was the founder of this cult, Chuang-tzu was the person responsible for popularising it among the masses and classes of China. He was to Lao-tze what St. Paul was to Christ.

The teachings of Taoism have much in common with the ideas of the Upanishads, and there are competent critics like Father P. L. Weiger who opine that it is only an adaptation of Vedantic teachings to the religious needs of China. While this resemblance is quite evident even in the writings of Lao-tze, who according to Chinese legends had visited India by

the overland route, it becomes still more patent in the thought of Chuang-tzu. Whether this is due to direct Indian influence or mere coincidence of thought is difficult for us to decide. Whatever be the reason, from the point of view of philosophical affinity, it will be no exaggeration to style Chuang-tzu as a Vedantist of China.

As far as his worldly position was concerned, Chuang-tzu was only a petty official in a small provincial town. But his philosophical genius brought him into the lime-light of the public. He had to fight with the leading scholars of the age to defend and disseminate his doctrines. Due to lack of worldly ambition he could not gain promotion in his career, and had to give up his job ere long. A

born philosopher, Chuang-tzu was "bold in fancy yet retiring by disposition, prone to melancholy yet full of eager enthusiasm." As Spinoza refused to accept a professorship of philosophy in the Heedelberg University even when requested by a German prince and remained content with his humble profession of pebble-grinding, so this Chinese philosopher too refused to become the Prime Minister of the State of Chu, inspite of the best persuasions of the Prince of that State through his chief officials.

There is an interesting anecdote about this refusal of his. A deputation consisting of the State officials of Chu waited on Chuang-tzu while he was fishing in the Pu river. Chuang-tzu went on with his work, and without turning his head said, "I have heard that in Chu State there is a sacred tortoise which has been dead now some three thousand years and that the Prince keeps this tortoise carefully enclosed in a chest on the altar of his ancestral temple. Now would this tortoise rather be dead and have its remains venerated, or be alive and wagging its tail in the mud?" When the officials affirmed the latter, Chuang-tzu cried, "Be gone! I too will wag my tail in the mud!"<sup>1</sup> Chuang-tzu did not seek any worldly advancement, for he was rich in the things of the spirit. In the words of the poet, he had nothing of this earth, yet he had everything of Heaven.

Another anecdote confirms that his mind was always dominated by the idea of holiness and renunciation. Once Chuang-tzu went to visit his

friend, Hui-tzu, the Prime Minister of the Liang State. It was falsely rumoured that Chuang-tzu had gone to take the place of his friend. Hui-tzu got afraid and wanted to see him in order to know the truth of the rumour. After many days' search, Hui-tzu met his friend, and Chuang-tzu thereupon said to him, "In the South there is a bird, a kind of phoenix. Do you know anything about it? It started from the South sea to fly to the north sea. It would eat nothing but the fruit of the bamboo, drink nothing but the purest spring water, and would not alight anywhere except on the sacred tree. An owl which had got the rotten carcass of a rat looked up as the phoenix flew by, and screeched. Are you not screeching at me, like the owl, over the kingdom of Liang?"

Chuang-tzu believed like the Vedantists of India in the immortality of the soul. He knew from his own spiritual experiences that the soul is eternal and immortal, and that death is also a passing phase in its eternal existence. Death destroys only the physical body but cannot do anything to the soul. Hence the bereavement of his wife could not sadden his heart at all. His intimate friend, Hui-tzu, who went to condole and console him, found the widower sitting on the ground with his legs spread out at right angles, and singing and drumming on a bowl. At this Hui-tzu exclaimed in surprise and said that it was bad enough for Chuang-tzu not to shed a drop of tear over the corpse of his life-long companion but that he was surely going too far to drum on a bowl and sing. "Not at all," replied Chuang-tzu, "when my wife passed away I could not for the time help being affected by her death.

<sup>1</sup> This and the following personal anecdotes of Chuang-tzu are gleaned from "Musings of a Chinese Mystic" published in The Wisdom of the East Series, London.

Soon, however, I remembered that she had existed before birth in an unconditioned condition, and that after death she will continue to exist in another state. I therefore refrained from sorrowing. For, to die means to pass from one phase to another like the sequence of spring, summer, autumn and winter. And while she is thus lying asleep in Eternity, for me to go about weeping and wailing would be to proclaim myself ignorant of this Truth I have realised. Hence I do not mourn." ॐ ॐ ॐ

Chuang-tzu was blessed with the cosmic consciousness, and all his life, his mind was rooted in it. This fact is corroborated by the following anecdote, quite reminiscent of realised Vedantists. When Chuang-tzu was in his death-bed, his dear disciples expressed a desire to give him a splendid funeral. But Chuang-tzu said : "With heaven and earth as my coffin and shell, with the sun, moon and stars as my burial regalia, and with all creation to escort me to the grave—are not my funeral paraphernalia ready at hand?" "We fear," replied the disciples, "lest the carrion-kite should eat the body of our master." To this Chuang-tzu said : "Above ground I shall be food for kites ; below I shall be food for mole-crickets and ants. Why rob one to feed the other?" This anecdote without a shade of doubt proves that Chuang-tzu was imbued like the Hindu Rishis with the experience that 'All this is Brahman.'

"The perfect man" in the opinion of this ancient Chinese Philosopher "can transcend the limits of the human and yet not withdraw from the world?" Perfection consists," says Chuang-tzu, "in the knowledge of the The Great One (Tao), and to attain

this state one must go beyond good and evil and all pairs of opposites." His fast friend and close companion, Hui-tzu used to discuss with him many a problem of life and death. Once Hui-tzu asked him whether there were men who had no passions. Chuang-tzu replied that they certainly were. Hui-tzu argued what it was that made him a man, who was devoid of passions. He replied that Tao gave him expression and Teh gave him form. Why should he not be a man? The questioner reiterated that if he was a man, then how could he be without passions. "What you mean by passions," answered Chuang-tzu, "is not what I mean. By a man without passion I mean one who does not permit good and evil to disturb his internal equilibrium, but rather falls in with whatever happens, as a matter of course, and does not add to the sum of his morality." It is needless to add that Chuang-tzu spoke from his own experience about the state of perfection. That is why his exposition of the eternal verities of life carry conviction into the hearts of men.

About his peaceful old age he sang thus : "Tao gave me toil in manhood, gives me repose in old age and will give me rest in death." "Within my heart no sorrows can abide. I feel the great world's spirit through me thrill. If I depart I cast no look behind ; if still alive, I still am free from care. Thus strong in faith I wait and long to be one with the pulsings of Eternity."

The conception of Tao, the pivotal principle in the ancient Chinese philosophy, is almost the same as that of Brahman. This is also evident from a comparison of definitions. "Tao," says Chuang-tzu "is some-

thing beyond material existences. It cannot be conveyed either by words or by silence. In that state which is neither speech nor silence, its transcendental nature may be apprehended. The very name of Tao is only adopted for the sake of convenience." Lao-tze speaks of Tao as having existed before heaven and earth, i.e. as the first Principle. Chuang-tzu calls it the Mystic Moral Principle or Self-luminous Law. We may conclude therefore that Tao<sup>2</sup> is equivalent to Brahman. Is the Chinese word 'Tao' a corrupted form of the Sanskrit word 'Tat'? Who knows?

To Chuang-tzu the highest form of virtue does not mean the mortification of physical nature or living the life of a hermit, but consists in the contemplation of Tao which can alone destroy attachment to existence and loosen the soul from the transmigratory shackles. He condemns both ritualism and asceticism, and recommends "the fasting of the heart," as conducive to illumination.

Exactly like a Hindu Vedantist Chuang-tzu believes that "every human being has a soul, which is an emanation from the great Impersonal Soul of the Universe. Soul is in its nature immortal and after passing through a series of different states in conditioned being, finally reunites with Divine Essence from which it sprang."

In accepting all human experiences as relative Taoism comes very near the Vedantic conception of Maya. Romain Rolland and Devamata, representing European and American

minds respectively, understand Maya as Relativity. Buddhism also has a doctrine of illusion in the same sense. There is a saying of Lao-tze that the recognition of beauty as such implies the idea of ugliness and the recognition of good, the idea of evil. Chuang-tzu expands this doctrine and insists on the ultimate relativity of all human perceptions. Not only space and time, he asserts, are relative but also every form of sense knowledge that is gained by looking at things only from one point of view. The doctrine of illusion as advocated by Chuang-tzu fulfils his doctrine of Relativity. He says that life is a delusion after all. "While they dream," remarks Chuang-tzu "they do not know that they are dreaming. Some will even interpret the very dream they are dreaming; and when they awake they know that it was a dream. By and by comes the great awakening and then we find out that this life is really a great dream." "Once upon a time I, Chuang-tzu, dreamt I was a butterfly, fluttering hither and thither, to all intents and purposes a butterfly. I was conscious of following my fancies as a butterfly and was unconscious of my individuality as man. Suddenly I awoke, and there I lay, myself again. Now I do not know whether I was then a man dreaming I was a butterfly, or whether I am now a butterfly dreaming I am a man. Between a man and a butterfly there is necessarily a barrier. The transition is called metempsychosis."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>For a detailed definition of Tao, see "Tao-Teh-King" published by the Shrine of Wisdom, London. Paul Carus' edition (Open Court Publishing House, Chicago) is also equally good, if not better.

<sup>3</sup>For the wealth of illustrations which is a noteworthy feature of Chuang-tzu's writings, see his famous work "Nan Hwa King" and other important Taoist Texts published in the "Sacred Books of the East" series, Oxford.

Before we conclude we shall give below some of the pregnant sayings of Chuang-tzu that disclose his profundity of thought and depth of wisdom.

"The perfect man ignores self; the divine man ignores action; the true sage ignores reputation." "If men's passions are deep, their spirituality is shallow." "The pure men of old slept without dreams, and awoke without anxiety. They act without discrimination, breathing deep breaths. For pure men draw breaths from their uttermost depths; the vulgar only from their throats." "The mind of the sage, being in repose, becomes the mirror of the Universe, the speculum of all creation." "Take no heed of time, nor of right and wrong; but passing into the realm of the Infinite, take your final rest therein." "Our life has a limit, but knowledge is without limit." "He who delights in man is himself not a perfect man." "Fishes are born in water. Man is born in Tao. If fishes get ponds to live in, they thrive. If man gets Tao to live in, he may live his life in peace." "What I call perfection of hearing is not hearing others but hearing oneself. What I call perfection of vision is not seeing others but seeing oneself." "A man who knows he is a

fool, is not a great fool." "Alas! the life of man is but a stoppage at an inn." "The best language is that which is not spoken, the best form of action is that which is without deeds." "Let knowledge stop at the unknowable. That is perfection." "Birth is not a beginning; death not an end." "Discard the stimuli of purpose. Free the mind from disturbances. Get rid of entanglements to virtue. Pierce the obstructions to Tao." "Get rid of small wisdom, and great wisdom will shine upon you." "Alas! man's knowledge reaches to the hair on a hair, but not to eternal peace." "The highest reaches of Tao, seem to us darkness and silence. When It holds the soul in Its arms in stillness, even the body becomes pure." "Only the perfect man can live in the world and yet remain withdrawn, can live in accord with mankind and yet remain himself." "The heart of the perfect man is as a mirror; it reflects all things, but holds nothing for itself alone." "He who rests with resignation within himself, unconscious of change or transformation, becomes one with Tao." "There is the way of Heaven; there is the way of man. Action in inaction is the way of Heaven; action with resistance is the way of man."

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# SWETASWATARA UPANISHAD

By Swami Thyagisananda

## CHAPTER II

### PREFACE

In the third Mantra as well as the closing verses of the previous chapter, reference has been made to Dhyana or meditation as the best means for realising the Ultimate Principle behind the universe. The present chapter attempts to give a more detailed treatment of the subject of meditation.

The first five verses are taken bodily, with slight variations here and there, from the Samhita portion of the Vedas, and some of them are also cited in the Brahmanas and interpreted in relation to their application to liturgy. The Upanishad, however, makes use of them as relating to Yogic Sadhana, and in its application to Brahma-Vidya. These verses are often taken as authority to show that meditation and self-culture are as old as the Vedas.

युञ्जानः प्रथमं मनस्तत्त्वाय सविता धियः ।

अग्नेज्योतिर्निचाप्य पृथिव्या अध्याभरत् ॥

प्रथमं = first मनः = the mind धियः = the senses (च—and) तत्त्वाय = with a view to realise the Truth युञ्जानः = harnessing सविता = the Ultimate Principle conceived of as the immanent cause of the evolution of the Universe (Antaryamin) अग्नेः = of the fire ज्योतिः = light निचाप्य = having found out पृथिव्याः = out of the earth अध्याभरत् = brought out.

First harnessing the mind and the senses<sup>1</sup> with a view to realise the Truth<sup>2</sup>, and then having found out the light of the fire<sup>3</sup>, the evolving Soul<sup>4</sup> brought itself out of the earth<sup>5</sup>. (1)

*Note.*—The verse alludes to the preliminary steps in the process of Sadhana.

1. *Harnessing the mind and senses*—This refers to the preliminary process of attaining Chitta-Suddhi by a life of self-control in accordance with the rules of Dharma.

2. *With a view to realise the Truth*—Unless the Sadhaka has the goal always in view, he is apt to follow the rules in a mechanical way unintelligently. He may often be led inadvertently to follow certain rules which are detrimental to his spiritual progress unless he is very careful, being carried away by mere custom and tradition.

3. *The light of the fire*—Fire and light are both symbolic. Fire refers to the ordinary waking intellect conscious of external objects, and light refers to the pure consciousness or Chaitanya. To find out the light of fire is to understand that the pure consciousness is separate from the ordinary consciousness of the intellect. This part of the verse alludes to the capacity to dis-



criminate between truth and untruth, the first of the four qualifications demanded of the spiritual aspirant according to the Advaita system.

4. *The evolving Soul*—The word Savita ordinarily means 'one who brings forth or creates'. It is generally used as a synonym of Surya to mean the sun. The visible sun has no part to play in spiritual practice, and so the word is here used symbolically to denote the Antaryamin or the Ultimate Principle conceived intellectually as the source of all creation and as working constantly and eternally in the hearts of all beings to raise them to higher and higher levels of life, and thereby causing the process of evolution from behind the scene. This inner urge for greater and still greater perfection, which never stops until absolute perfection is attained, is the cause of all evolution. Cosmologically, the Ultimate Principle is thought of as being associated with a power called Maya which belongs to Itself, and of which It is the absolute master. All spiritual practice is thus the result of this natural urge of the involved Brahman to find its natural level of absolute purity and perfection. It will thus be clear what part the Antaryamin plays in spiritual life.

5. *Out of the earth*—The expression is used symbolically to denote matter in general. The allusion here is to the development of the spirit of renunciation which is the second of the four qualifications demanded of the aspirant. 'Brought itself out of the earth' means 'extracted itself out of all attachments to the pleasures of the world.'

The whole verse therefore insists upon the development of the necessary purity of mind (Chitta-Suddhi) as a result of self-control and righteous life, and the acquisition of the necessary discrimination (Viveka) and Vairagya (renunciation) as preliminary steps in spiritual practice (Sadhana). This is in terms of Advaita Sadhana. In terms of Yogic Sadhana the verse might be taken to refer to the preliminary steps of Yama, Niyama and Pratyahara.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### **An Indian Savant honoured**

The appointment of Sir S. Radhakrishnan as the first Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford is a memorable event of this year from the point of view of Indian culture. All lovers of India will feel that it is an honour done not only to the Professor personally, but to our country and culture as a whole. But the joy of cultural India on this occasion is not, however, quite unalloyed, seeing that such a recognition of Indian scholar-

ship by the Universities of Great Britain has been long overdue.

Sir S. Radhakrishnan is one of the very few Indians who have gained the ear of the world. Few will agree with him in attributing this to mere luck or to the timeliness of his volumes on Indian philosophy, as he modestly did the other day at an entertainment held in his honour. His hitherto published works amply show that his reputation rests on no such accidental factor but on the solid worth of his many-sided intellectual attain-

ments, his rare literary abilities and his vast erudition in the systems of thought, both ancient and modern, Eastern as well as Western. It is no exaggeration to say that Professor Radhakrishnan has set a new standard and created a new tradition in the exposition of Indian philosophy. The ordinary exponent of Indian philosophy has not yet been able to orientate himself in proper relation to the vast accumulation of modern knowledge. He still swears by Nyaya physics and Ayurvedic physiology, while his scholarly conscience, even now predominated by Tika and Tippi tradition, views originality of thought as a heinous crime and as an act of infidelity to the mighty minds of old. Sir S. Radhakrishnan is the one Indian philosopher who has had the courage to set at naught the cramping influence of traditionalism, and adopt an interpretative method even in expounding ancient systems of thought. Arts and sciences have progressed by leaps and bounds since the great founders of Indian systems lived. To ignore this fact in the exposition of Indian philosophy is to invite ridicule on our culture. Co-ordination and re-statement are what we want to-day in the field of Indian philosophy, and this Professor Radhakrishnan has attempted in his works, especially in his masterpiece, the Idealist View of Life, with a mastery of the literary art unsurpassed by any Indian who has used the English language as the medium of expression. For this he has been found fault with by Indian philosophical snobs, but for this has he gained recognition and reputation all the world over as the chief liaison officer between the East and the West.

We hope the new position which he has been invited to occupy at Oxford will give him ampler opportunities to discharge the work of interpreting India to the West.

### **Is there a Blight on Philosophy ?**

At a dinner party given at Madras recently in honour of Sir S. Radhakrishnan's appointment to the above mentioned professorship at Oxford, Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, in the course of his speech, raised the question why "some blight has fallen on philosophy in our universities and educational establishments." It is well-known that several colleges in India have, in their scheme of retrenchment, applied the axe to the Philosophy Department and abolished the chair in that subject. Sir S. Radhakrishnan was asked to give an explanation of this, and his views on the question are in many respects interesting and illuminating. He pointed out that there was no blight on philosophy at all in this country till recently. When they were not able to take into account concrete problems concerning their immediate condition, when they wanted to drive away philosophy into remote and abstract speculations which had little bearing on practical life, there would certainly be a blight. It was absolutely essential to make philosophy have a bearing in life. It was essential again to translate that into social strength. It was possible for this individual or that to go to the mountain top or a monastery and save his soul. But, it would not be possible for a society to save itself, if it became isolated and became a hermit nation. It was essential that the ideas that they were able to bring out in the solitary hours of their contemplation should be utilised for the

sustenance of society. It was because latterly they had not been able to make philosophy have direct bearing on life, that some kind of blight had overtaken philosophy itself, that the social life was imperilled and millions of people who found their life meaningless on account of social mal-adjustment dismissed philosophy as something which was of no concern to them in their daily existence.

To our mind the downfall of philosophy does not appear to be an isolated phenomenon peculiar to India. It is a part of the world-wide decline in prestige that an ancient branch of study has undergone. In the universities of Europe also philosophy used to occupy a much more important place than it does to-day. They might not have scraped off the philosophy department as several colleges in this country have done ; but that is only because they are financially much better off than educational institutions in our country and have therefore no need to court the disgrace of an apparently mean course. But in a country where the Government depends on the salt tax for its solvency, colleges and universities need feel no humiliation to save a few rupees at the expense of philosophy.

Philosophy has declined all the world over because as Sir S. Radhakrishnan pointed out men have begun to doubt its practical utility. With the growth of experimental sciences, the pure seeker after truth has begun to place more reliance on them than on philosophy for the understanding of life and nature. With the advent of industrialism, training in technology is found to be more advantageous than knowledge of humanities by those who want to prepare themselves

for a career with good prospects. Philosophy has therefore lost the allegiance of talented men, as they have turned their attention to subjects of more practical utility.

This state of affairs is bound to continue and philosophy remain a 'depressed subject' in the educational curriculum until it becomes really useful for men in modern life. As we find it to-day, improvement in the conditions of life does not very much seem to elevate the position of philosophy. Patriotism, nationalism, socialism and other similar 'isms' are perhaps going to be more and more operative in ordering the collective life of societies in the future, and philosophy may not find its proper mission in that field, unless of course we are prepared to admit that philosophy is purely a subject of secular significance. But philosophy, at least as understood in India, has a much wider scope and a deeper significance. It is a Darsana, a method of gaining insight into the nature of man and his place in the scheme of existence taken not simply in its sensuous meaning but in its transcendental significance as well. There is the field for philosophy in the future. In spite of exact sciences, industrialism, and improved standard of living, there is a lot of discontent and disharmony that make life unbearable for the modern mind. For one thing, cases of neurosis, domestic unhappiness and suicides are becoming commoner with the spread of modernism in all its virulence. Exact sciences and technology are of no use here. They cannot cure men of these soul-distracting maladies ; they can only contribute to them and make the matter more complicated. If philosophy can do something for relieving the ills of

life in this respect, it may hope to regain its lost ground. For this it has however to develop from a purely academic subject into a true Darsana. The philosopher in his turn while retaining his intellectuality and erudition has to become a mystic, and training in philosophy, besides developing the power of thought, has also to aim at culturing the intuitive power of man.

For true mysticism is the leaven of philosophy ; without it philosophy is useless intellectual fabrication. If philosophical academies can produce sages, not of the world-shunning but of the world-elevating type, the blight on philosophy will automatically disappear. No more will there then be talk of academic philosophy but only of applied philosophy.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**INDIAN MYSTICISM : MYSTICISM IN MAHARASHTRA :** By Prof. R. D. Ranade. Published by Aryabhushan Press, Shanwar Peth, Poona. Pages 475. Price Rs. 15 library edition ; Rs. 10 ordinary edition.

This book which constitutes the 7th volume of the History of Indian Philosophy Series is quite a readable and edifying work on the mediæval saint poets of Maharashtra that wrote or sang in Mahratti, viz., Jnanadeva, Namadeva, Ekanatha, Tukarama, Ramadasa and their contemporaries. Extracts from these translated into English take up more than three-fourths of its bulk, and make it specially valuable to those who, though ignorant of the Mahratti language, yet aspire to enjoy its spiritual treasures. The work begins with Jnaneswara who lived in the last quarter of the thirteenth century A.D., and his *magnum opus*, *Jnaneswari*, a commentary in ovi metre on the Bhagavad Gita. His minor work, *Amritanubhava*, a short account of the experiences and impressions of saints and God-realisers, his hymns (*abhangas*) &c., and a brief glance at the songs of his contemporaries, Nivrutti, Sopana, Muktabai, and Chandeva complete the first part of the book, named "Intellectual Mysticism," implying that Advaita Jnana, i.e., Sri Sankara's method or manner of realising Brahman is its predominant feature. The second part deals with Namadeva and the poets of his age ; and their mysticism is styled "Democratic mysticism," not merely because of their use of the vernacular and of a popular and simple method of teaching but also because of their appeal to all classes, castes, sexes and ages. Inci-

dentally the author notes that one feature of this appeal is to slur over *Swadharma-charana*, i.e., duties arising out of each man's caste, position or lot.

The next age, which is the subject of Part III, is that of Ekanatha, the famous author of the Mahratti *Srimad Bhagavata*, and his contemporaries. Their views and ways are labelled "Syncretic Mysticism" to denote the fact that they combined the mysticism of the previous age with attention to social duties and *Swadharma-charana*. Tukarama, the Kirtana performer and author of innumerable compositions, and his contemporaries are dealt with in Part IV, headed, rather curiously, 'Personalistic mysticism.' Personalism here denotes that Tukarama's mystic experience was moulded by the vicissitudes of his own life as set out in his songs. The chief of these incidents are the death of his wife during a famine for lack of food, the humiliations to which he, a poor ill-educated Sudra, and his verses were subjected, his steadily swelling cup of sorrows, his increasing despair, querulousness, and doubt about the justice, and mercy, or even the very existence of God, his attempt at suicide, his sudden attainment of beatific God vision, his repeated loss of the sense of self in the feeling that the entire universe is God, and his alleged final ascent to heaven with his physical body on a *Vimana*, a feat vainly attempted by Trisanku with the mighty help of Visvamitra.

The book closes with its fifth and last part, giving an account of Ramadasa (the great Guru and inspirer of Sivaji Chatra-

pati) and his "Activistic Mysticism"—a label intended to emphasise the fact that Ramadasa amidst his various teachings in his *Dasabodha*, etc., stressed the compatibility of *Swadharma* or one's active discharge of the duties one owes to one's self, group and country, with spiritual progress and God-realisation.

The songs of these saints are well-known to, and highly prized and used by, the people of Maharashtra at their devotional gatherings, *bhajan*s, *kirtan*s, &c., but are almost a sealed book to others, who must therefore be thankful to Mr. Ranade for the present publication. While the extracts given in the book and the comments thereon are of undoubted interest and occasionally touch the fringe of Mysticism, readers specially interested in that subject may feel rather disappointed with certain features of the book. They may feel, for instance, that all the variations in his labels refer to mere accidental concomitants of Mysticism and have no real connection with or bearing upon the mystic experience referred to in each case, that mysticism does not develop from age to age, that the variations in the contents of mystic experience, dependent chiefly on its type, have not been adverted to, that all mysticism may be considered personalistic in the sense that a personal history of joys, sorrows, etc., might lie behind it, developing, moulding, retarding or colouring it at various stages, that mysticism, in itself, is never democratic or aristocratic, that activistic mysticism is "synergetic," and may also be 'personalistic,' 'democratic,' etc., and that much that has been referred to as mysticism in the book, is unconnected with intuitive and direct apprehension of Reality. It has also to be remarked that the treatment, instead of being a scientific analysis and evaluation as in the case of standard works on Western Mysticism, is only a bare historical and textual review of the subject. These shortcomings may perhaps be due to the fact that the Publishers had to change the original programme of the series. They promise to give a further and fuller definition, analysis and evaluation in another volume entitled "The Pathway to God."

THE SCIENCE OF THE SOUL (SRI SANKARACHARYA'S BHASHYA ON THE BRAHMA SUTRAS). By Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswamy Sastri. The Manager, The Dharma-rajya Office, 47, Swami Naick Street, Chintadripet, Madras. Pages 207. Price Rs. 1-8 only.

This handy volume contains the text in Devanagari character of Badarayana's Brahma-sutras arranged together in Adhikaranas and followed by their English translation, to which is appended a brief summary of Sankara's commentary, also in English. This novel arrangement of presenting all the aphorisms forming one Adhikarana or topic of discussion together in one place so as to have a clear grasp of the march of thought and line of argument is itself a great achievement towards clarity. The next achievement of the learned author is his summary of Sankara's commentary. Sankara's commentary on the Brahma-sutras is noted for its terseness and brevity; to have prepared a preeminently readable summary of such a work in so brief a compass and without omitting any interesting and relevant discussion in the original must in itself be described as an achievement in the art of selection and abridgment. A perusal of the book shows that at the back of it is a mind thoroughly conversant with the original writings of Sankara, and with the needs and intricate workings of the religious mind of to-day. Another valuable feature of the book deserving special mention here is the fact that the author gives in proper context all the important Upanishadic texts on which the Acharya has based his commentary. It is also delightful to notice in brackets on almost every page of the book short selections from the text of the commentary, the most beautiful gems of Sankara's own creation. The reader feels assured that a perusal of this book, written in a direct argumentative manner and in a simple flowing style, will acquaint him not only with the Acharya's thought, but also with his technique of argument and the inimitable literary beauty of his style. Even in the translation of the Sutras the author's aim has been to present the ideas contained therein as clearly as possible without aiming at a too literal version. As a popular edition of Sankara's

interpretation of the Brahma-sutras the book occupies a high rank.

But the book suffers from a few defects which, we hope, will be remedied in a subsequent edition. The Sanskrit portion of the book is full of printing mistakes from which even the Sutras are not free. Then there is no consistency in the method of transliteration. The modern reader will also feel it somewhat annoying to note that the book is without a table of contents and an index, the unavoidable accompaniments of every serious publication in these days. These are, however, unimportant defects which may easily be overcome in the next edition to the enhancement of the value of the book and to the convenience of the readers. The volume as it is even now, will no doubt be highly prized by the English reading public, especially by the university students of Indian philosophy.

THE UNADISUTRAS IN VARIOUS RECENSIONS:  
*Madras University Sanskrit Series No. 7.*  
*Parts 2 & 6. Edited by T. R. Chintamani,*  
*M.A., Ph.D. Published by the University*  
*of Madras. Price Rs. 2-8 or 4 sh. and*  
*Rs. 3 or 6 sh. respectively.*

The Department of Sanskrit in the University of Madras has deserved the gratitude of the scholars by bringing out the Unadisutras in various recensions accompanied by some of the important commentaries and embellished with all the paraphernalia of a modern critical edition—General Introduction, textual variants, notice of manuscripts, Index to Sutras, Index to words, Index to works and authors cited, etc. The learned editor has evinced something of that 'German patience' in this, by no means easy undertaking. Working upon moth-eaten manuscripts bristling with clerical and other errors and marred by several lacunae, he has succeeded to an eminent degree in establishing a correct text with the least number of gaps. The Sutras known under the name of Unadi, it is well-known, form an interesting item in almost all the systems of Sanskrit grammar and though not as important as the Astadhyayi itself, their authority has been constantly invoked by commentators of Vedic texts in fixing the accent of words or in tracing the meaning and formation of several vocables mostly out-of-the-way. This review concerns itself with parts 2 and 6 only of this publication.

Part 2 gives the Unadi as preserved in the Prakriyasarvasva, a voluminous grammatical work. Part 6 consists of the Unadi Su. of Bhoja and the Un. Su. of the Katantra; the former is accompanied by the commentary of Dandanarayana and the latter by that of Durgasimha. The peculiarity about Bhojas' Unadi is that he has incorporated the Sutras in the body of his grammatical work known by the name of Sarasvatikanthabharanam while others have dealt with them in a separate appendix. Of all the three recensions before us, that of Prakriyasarvasva is the most comprehensive and the comment by Narayana Bhatta on them is the most exhaustive and illuminating. The indebtedness of Bhatta to Bhoja is patent on almost every page. Nevertheless Narayana Bhatta's Vritti is remarkable in several ways. He is such a staunch supporter of the Vyutpattipaksa that he makes out a sense from the root out of which a particular word is supposed to be derived and which apparently bears no relation in sense. Thus, for instance, the words kutumba (a family), manduka (a frog), papa (sin), pustaka (a book) and vipra (a brahmana) are derived from √kut=to be crooked (what makes the mind crooked, wife, etc., P. 147), √mand=to decorate (what is decorated with stripes P. 92), √pib=to drink (what drinks up happiness, P. 58), √pus=to nourish (what nourishes knowledge) and √vap=to sow (in whom seeds of merit are sown) respectively. It is rather amusing to note the derivations of words like Yavana, Turuska, Kasmira and Kalinga from roots. The word maccha derived from √mad is a prakritism. Isvara and anna usually derived from √is=to lord over (see Pan 3-2-175), and √ad=to eat are, according to the Unadi, from √ac=to pervade and √an=to breathe. It seems Narayana Bhatta was slightly disconcerted by the sight of new vocables by legions, that he could not draw a line of demarcation; so a few Malayalam words as instanced in the case of (P. 111), mani, a bell (P. 109), tali, an ornament for the neck and (P. 97) parpata, a particular fried dish were all pompously derived from roots and given the royal eminence of Sanskrit words. On page 28 appears a Karika to the effect that the word padma is written wrongly as patma in the south,

and to add to the confusion we notice even to-day the word pronounced with an 'I' sound in the Kerala country.

May we suggest that the book would have been more compact and convenient for reference had it been possible to adopt some such plan as that we see adopted in the *Adventures of Vikrama* published by the Harvard University where we find almost parallel presentation of the various recensions? However, the work has been executed satisfactorily with the following reservations. On page 22, line 14 *Katantra Unadi* we notice the ✓ jani printed with the *anubandha* ॐ which is not so found in the *Dhatupatha*; so also on page

23, lines 13 and 14 of the same, we meet ✓ caksun which also according to the *Dhatupatha* where it is found as ✓ caksin, is in all probability a mistake. It has also to be remarked that the book suffers from a number of misprints. Here is a list of such errors that have not been noticed in the corrigenda put up at the end of each part. Part II page 46, line 9; page 85, line 4; page 142, line 20; Part VI Bhoja's U : Page 32, line 23; P. 33, line 6; P. 36, line 14; P. 37, line 18; P. 38, line 3; P. 53, line 7; P. 54, line 1; P. 56, line 2; P. 63, line 22; P. 70, line 18; P. 71, line 2; P. 72, line 14; Part VI Kat : Un. P. 9, line 11; P. 19, line 13; P. 32, line 20; P. 40, line 18; P. 45, line 4; P. 62, line 19.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Sri Ramakrishna Centenary : Thesis and Essay Competition

The public are hereby informed that, under the auspices of the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary, Thesis and Essay competitions will be held all over India, Burma and Ceylon, on the lines indicated below :

I. *Thesis Competition* : It is open to men and women of India, Burma and Ceylon. The competitors should possess the minimum academic qualification corresponding to M.A., M.Sc., etc., of Indian Universities. The Thesis should be written in English on "*The philosophy of Sri Ramakrishna and its bearing on world-culture*" and be complete in about 20,000 (twenty thousand) words. First prize—Rs. 200 in cash. Second prize—Rs. 150 in cash.

II. *Essay Competition* : (a) Among College Students : It is open to college students (both boys and girls) of all grades, belonging to educational institutions of India, Burma and Ceylon (Government, private or otherwise). The essay should be written in English on "*Sri Ramakrishna's contribution to the social and religious life of India*" and should not exceed 4,000 (four thousand) words. *For boy-students* : First prize—Rs. 30. Second prize—Rs. 25. *For girl-students* : First prize—Rs. 30. Second prize—Rs. 25. Each prize shall comprise a copy of "The Cultural Heritage of India" (The Ramakrishna Centenary Volume in two parts of about 2,000 pages of double crown octavo), one medallion and

(b) Among School Students : It is open to all boys and girls of matriculation or corresponding classes in educational institutions of India, Burma and Ceylon (Government, private or otherwise). The Essay should be written in their own mother tongues on "Sri Ramakrishna and his Teachings" in about 2,000 words. The competitors of this group are invited to write their essays in any of the following languages : (1) Assamese ; (2) Bengali ; (3) Oriya ; (4) Hindi ; (5) Urdu ; (6) Gurumukhi ; (7) Sindhi ; (8) Gujrati ; (9) Marathi ; (10) Tamil ; (11) Telugu ; (12) Malayalam ; (13) Kanarese ; (14) Burmese ; (15) Sinhalese.

There will be 60 prizes in all for school boys and girls. In each language group two prizes will be awarded to the best two essayists among the boys and two to the best two among the girls. *For boys* : First prize—Rs. 15. Second prize—Rs. 10. *For girls* : First prize—Rs. 15. Second prize—Rs. 10. Each prize shall consist of valuable books and a medallion.

N.B.—The Thesis and Essays should be written neatly and clearly on only one side of the paper and not on both sides and should reach the undersigned on or before the 31st July, 1936. The essay competitors should produce a certificate from the heads of the institutions to which they belong, to the effect that they are bonafide students of their respective schools and colleges. All communications may be addressed to Swami Sambuddhananda, Asst. Secretary, Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Committee, 15, College Square, Calcutta.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

# THE VEDANTA KESARI

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## HINDU ETHICS

अज्ञानप्रभवो मोहः पापाभ्यासात् प्रवर्तते ।  
यदा प्राज्ञेषु रमते तदा सद्यः प्रणश्यति ॥  
प्रीतेः शोकः प्रभवति वियोगात्तस्य देहिनः ।  
यदा निरर्थकं वेत्ति तदा सद्यः प्रणश्यति ॥  
कुलात् ज्ञानात् तथैश्वर्यात् मदो भवति देहिनाम् ।  
एभिरेव तु विज्ञातैः मदः सद्यः प्रणश्यति ॥  
कृपणात् सततं दृष्ट्वा ततः संजायते कृपा ।  
धर्मनिष्ठां यदा वेत्ति तदा शाम्यति सा कृपा ॥  
अज्ञानप्रभवो लोभो भूतानां दृश्यते सदा ।  
अस्थिरत्वं च भोगानां दृष्ट्वा ज्ञात्वा निवर्तते ॥

Ignorance is the source of delusion. It becomes active by repetition of vicious deeds. As soon as the person takes pleasure in the company of wise men delusion falls off. Distress comes out of pleasures when the object in which the creature finds pleasure slips away from it. When that is realised to be meaningless, sorrow vanishes. Arrogance is the outcome of pedigree, learning and wealth. When these are known thoroughly, forthwith they fly. Beholding often the wretched, pity is evoked in the mind. When one understands the foundation of righteousness, it is quelled. Greed is always seen in creatures due to ignorance. By observing and understanding the inconstancy of enjoyments it stops.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Ch. 161-verses 10, 12, 15, 19, & 20.



# SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

*By Swami Saradananda*

[Further instances to show the intimacy that existed between the Master and Mathuranath are narrated here.]

## *Other incidents of like nature*

**N**UMEROUS are such occasions when the close-fisted Mathuranath behaved in the most generous fashion in order to please the Master. When he went on pilgrimage to the holy places of Benares, Brindavan, etc., he took the Master also along with him. At Benares, under the instruction of the Master, he took the vow of giving away anything that he might be asked for, and accordingly gave away all that people wanted of him. When the 'Father' was requested to ask for something on this occasion, the Master, failing to find out any want at all, at last asked for a water-pot only. This instance of the Master's spirit of renunciation brought tears to Mathuranath's eyes.

## *Mathuranath's service of the poor at Vaidyanath in obedience to the Master's desire*

In the course of the same pilgrimage, while the party was passing through a village near Vaidyanath, the Master's heart melted with pity at the sight of the misery of the people there. He therefore said to Mathuranath, "Are you not merely a secretary to the Mother? (i.e., all your wealth belongs actually to the Divine Mother and therefore should be spent for Her children.) Give these people, then, sufficient oil to rub on their heads and a hearty meal for a day along with a piece of cloth to each of them." At first Mathuranath hesitated a little. "There will be enormous expenditure at the place of

pilgrimage," he argued, "and the number of these people also is pretty large. If we now proceed to feed and clothe them, the money at our disposal may run short. What is your advice under these circumstances?" But the Master was in no mood to listen to his apologies. He was shedding profuse tears at the sight of the villagers' plight. His heart was filled with pity. "I won't go to your Benares," said he firmly, "I must live with these people. I cannot desert them when there is none to help them in their distress." With this, like an importunate child, he left the party and sat in the midst of the village people. Faced with this situation Mathuranath had no other alternative but to get down cloths from Calcutta and act in accordance with the Master's wish. The Master also was greatly delighted at the sight of the villagers' joy, and taking leave of them, went with Mathuranath with a smiling face. We have heard of another occasion when the Master was similarly moved to pity at the sight of the miserable condition of the people of a village within Mathuranath's estate, in the vicinity of Ranaghat. On this occasion too he made Mathuranath serve the people in the same way.

*The Master's relation with Mathuranath was ordained by Providence.*

*The Master on Mathuranath's re-birth in consequence of his desire for enjoyments*

The Master, ever established as he was in the attitude of the Guru, made

Mathuranath bound for ever with a sweet relation of this nature. This unique relation of love that existed between these two souls was the mature fruit of the Master's prayer to the Divine Mother during the period of his Sadhana : "O Mother, do not make me a dry ascetic, but keep me rather in the middle path."

It was in response to this prayer that the Divine Mother showed him the four persons who had been sent along with him with the special charge of preserving his body and supplying all his needs. Of these four, Mathuranath was the first and foremost. Had this relation been other than divinely ordained, could it last unimpaired for

such a long period? Few, alas, are the instances of this kind of sweet and pure relation the world has seen so far! One day, a friend of ours, while hearing from the Master himself the wonderful incidents about Mathuranath, became filled with wonder and admiration at his great fortune and inquired of the Master, "What happened to him, sir, after his death? Certainly, he will not have to be born again?" But the Master replied, "He must have been born somewhere as a king. For the desire for enjoyment was still there in him." With this the Master suddenly changed the topic.

## HINDUISM TO-DAY

In the following paragraphs we have tried to review the spiritual and social conditions that are exercising a devitalising influence on Hinduism. We do this not out of a sense of despair or a feeling that Hinduism has played out its part. On the other hand our idea is that Hinduism possesses vast spiritual potentialities and has got an important mission to fulfil in the world; but without a new religious and social adjustment these possibilities and expectations cannot be fully realised.]

### The Pride of the Past

IT has become a fashion in these days with every pious Hindu who writes or speaks about his religion to declare vehemently that Hinduism is the oldest of all religions and that it is as deathless as the Immortals themselves. It is no doubt a fact that it has withstood more attacks, directed from within and without, than any other faith in the world, and that its beliefs, ceremonials and institutions have in most cases a history that can be traced without a break to the hoary culture represented in the Vedic literature. There is nothing wrong in a people feeling a sort of pride in a tradition so ancient, so spiritual and so heroic, provided it is

made an incentive for achievements yet greater. But unfortunately we often misuse this pride of the past for deluding ourselves into a false sense of our present greatness, as scions of ruined aristocratic families do with the old traditions and achievements of their houses. There is nothing so ruinous as this to the future possibilities of a people. Hence whatever is said and done to rouse them from an impotent contemplation of the past to a consciousness of the hard realities of the present must be considered beneficial in every way, and that is our excuse in indulging in the following reflections.

It is a common belief among Indians themselves and among many

foreigners having a friendly disposition towards our country that India's contribution towards the culture of the world is mainly spiritual. Especially when we hear a friend of India from Europe or America declaring this in all sincerity and fervent expectation, we cannot help feeling humbled to the very core of our being; for the thought occurs—are we after all fit to discharge this great mission? Is modern India endowed with sufficient vitality and spiritual energy to fulfill this great expectation? In other words the question clinches itself into this: Is Hinduism to-day a sufficiently living force in the life of its followers, in the true sense conveyed by the term 'living' when applied to a religion?

### **The True Function of Religion**

In considering this point we have to determine, in the first place, what constitutes the true function of religion. In modern times attempts have been made by many scholars who are not themselves religious men, to formulate definitions of religion, and it has been the common criticism of all these definitions that none of them is satisfactory. None the less we may, from the spiritual point of view, describe religion as consisting in the quest after the ultimate meaning of life and regulating life in the conviction that there is such an ultimate meaning. If we examine the life of man, we shall find that in whatever station of it he may be, he attaches some purpose to it and directs his energies for realising the same. Thus when a person is a student, a degree or a diploma constitutes the meaning or purpose he attaches to life; when he is settled down in life, earning a livelihood and providing for his family becomes the guiding factor in life; or if by birth he is placed

beyond such needs, he may live for making a name in the world. The point to be noted is that man always attaches some meaning or purpose to every phase of life. But ordinarily he has only parts or periods of life in view, and he does not feel a need for seeking the significance of life as a whole. He seems to take only a regional view of life, investing the same with artificial and fleeting values born of the exigencies of life's struggle. His vision is always confined to the four walls of life, and seldom happens to go beyond it and take a view of it in its entirety, or, to enquire whether life, apart from the interests attached to its different aspects, has any meaning in its totality.

Religion, in its state of pristine purity, consists in this discovery of the meaning of life as a whole—a discovery without which a thoughtful person would feel that life with all its riches and beauties is nothing more than a long line of zeroes without any value-giving figure on the left. It is this meaning of life in its totality that has been described in the great world religions as God or the Supreme Being, and which some of the modern thinkers prefer to describe as Eternal Values. Just as a student's life gains a meaning when he has a diploma in view, or a citizen's life gains a significance when it aims at the acquisition of wealth or fame, so also life as a whole becomes meaningful, when it recognises God as its source and its end. The power and vitality of a religion as a source of spiritual upliftment can be measured by the degree in which a consciousness of this ultimate meaning of life is reflected in the life of its followers.

### **The Ideal of a Spiritual Society**

Hinduism has gained a high reputation for its spiritual standards because it has made an attempt to substitute this total view of it as a significant whole for what we described as man's regional view of it. It refuses to admit that the practice of religion is only the duty of old age or is the exclusive concern of a few who have set apart their lives for it. No particular period of life or no particular station in it is specially suited for the practice of religion to the exclusion of others. Whether one is a student or a citizen, a scholar or an ascetic, life is to be lived not for the limited purposes associated with these stages in it, or rather these purposes are not to be taken as being in themselves self-sufficient. On the other hand one is to recognise the total significance of life even in the particular purposes associated with its parts, or in other words look upon the discharge of even the temporal duties of life as a means for realising its ultimate purpose.

This is the general principle underlying the Hindu conception of every stage of life as an Ashrama, and the duties appertaining to it as Dharma. In the social and religious training of the Hindu, the one fact that is always kept before him is the truth that life in all its stages and aspects is a preparation for realising a higher spiritual status. Thus the student is required to look upon his period of education as not merely a training of his body and mind for taking part in the struggle of life, but also as a preparatory disciplining of his whole being for God-realisation. Hence the life of the student is called *Brahmacharya* or walking the path of God.

So also the life of the Grihastha or householder is to be devoted not merely to the acquisition of wealth and the other desirable things of this world; it is also a field for acquiring self-control, sympathy for all beings, devotion to God and the higher refinements of the soul. Thus a higher standard of living is not the sole aim of the householder's life; in fact without a higher standard of thought and spiritual attainment the purpose of life will be futile.

The conception of duty is also interpreted in a similar fashion.

Duty in the modern sense is entirely world-bound. It is a matter of obligation or professional honour. But according to Hindu ideals duty is a Dharma, having a significance much wider than the immediate purpose with which it is concerned. A duty or a lawful responsibility in life is a work entrusted by God into the hand of man, and a proper discharge of it is therefore the most tangible form of worship that man can offer unto Him. The mundane significance of the various forms of work is therefore transfigured into a great spiritual purpose. Thus for the student study is in itself not only an intellectual discipline, but also a worship of the supreme Being. For the citizen too his daily occupation in life, however humble or exalted it might be according to our worldly calculations, is a form of divine worship, besides being his means of livelihood. He may be a king or a military leader, he may be a politician or a business man, he may be a petty officer or a teacher, he may even be a labourer or a scavenger—provided he performs his work in the true spirit of worship, the spiritual efficacy derived therefrom is quite capable of cleaning his mind of all accumulated

dirt and bringing him to the door of spiritual realisation.

It will be amply clear from our explanation of the conceptions of Ashrama and Dharma what we mean by saying that true religion consists in ordering life not simply with reference to the artificial significance we attach to its phases but by a consideration of its significance as a whole. In looking upon studentship and citizenship as not only means for the fulfilment of their limited purposes but also as disciplines for spiritual realisation, Hinduism presents an ideal which is truly religious or spiritual to the core. A time there must have been when this idea used to be a living force in a considerable section of Hindu society, resulting in the production of a large number of spiritual giants and raising the general spiritual level of society as a whole. It is this fact that has gained for India a special reputation for spirituality.

We said in the beginning that India to-day is finding it difficult to fulfil the great expectations that many people outside are having about her. This is because the great idea that we have described above is increasingly disappearing from modern Hindu consciousness. In its absence, bare clinging to the forms of old institutions or vaunting about the achievements of the ancients is not going to bring any tangible benefit. When the spirit has broken down, the form becomes more a burden than a help. The spiritual outlook on life that we described before, and not any particular institution or form of social organisation like caste, has been the main source of the strength of Hinduism; and it is the decay of that ideal that is responsible for the torpid condition of Hinduism to-day.

### **The Strata of Hindu Society**

The modern Hindus may be divided into the following classes from the point of view of their religious outlook. Since in Indian society the open flouting of religion and the rejection of its sacraments and institutions have not become sufficiently noticeable as in the West, we cannot specify any group as avowedly non-religious. But none the less, we may describe a very large section of modern English educated people, consisting of lawyers, doctors, officers, business men, etc., as non-religious in as far as many of them have no faith in a spiritual principle, or even if they have no decided opinion on this point, do not bestow even a serious thought on it and problems allied to it, and therefore lead what may be described practically as a non-religious life. They may observe the social and sacramental rules associated with religion from very hoary times, but this is more as a matter of convenience than due to any conviction. In contrast to them is the overwhelmingly large group of religious folk. In this falls the huge mass of humanity constituting the Indian masses, whose religion is often of a very crude kind and adulterated on a very liberal scale with unhealthy superstitions. Often this class may seem very religious, but it is very doubtful whether their religiosity has any deep foundation. In contrast to the religion of the masses there is higher Hinduism with a twofold division in it. There is in the first place the section described as "orthodox people" who swear by every word of the ancient books, and believe in the efficacy of all the rules of caste and Acharas, ceremonial purity and impurity, of touchability and untouch-

ability enforced by the Shastras. These people are described now-a-days as Sanatanists. A large section of them is sincerely orthodox, but there are however a good many in this camp whose orthodoxy is the result of blind, unthinking conservatism or the outcome of a desire for social prestige and leadership. Lastly there is a small yet growing body of people at the present time who are as sincerely religious as the staunchest among the Sanatanists, but do not adhere to the letter of the Law, and find nothing sacrilegious in making a distinction between the essentials and non-essentials of Hinduism and rejecting, as belonging to the latter category, a considerable portion of what is described as Sanatana Dharma.

### **The Social Aspect of the Question**

Now this tendency for stratification into diverse spiritual and social layers is another feature of Hinduism at the present time that demands serious attention from those who believe that Hindus as a people have a distinctive contribution to make for the spiritual and moral well-being of the world. A religion has two aspects, the individual or purely spiritual aspect, and the collective or the social aspect. We have pointed out before the reason for the spiritual devitalisation of Hinduism to-day. Just as this spiritual lethargy is hampering the efflorescence of Hindu spiritual genius, so also the forces of social disintegration working apace among the Hindus is seriously threatening the health, nay, the very future existence of Hinduism. The seriousness of the situation will become patent if we just look at the numerical strength of Hindus and the other religionists in

this country, as revealed by the recent census figures. A time was when the whole of India was undoubtedly Hindu, a term in which we include the Buddhists and Jains also. But by the time that British power was established in India, Hindus formed only 80 per cent of India's population. The census figures available after that time show a steady decline in their numbers, and according to the latest census figures the Hindus form only 68.2 per cent of India's total population. What Hinduism has lost in the course of these years has undoubtedly been gained by other religions, especially by Christianity in modern times and by Islam in pre-British days.

This process of de-Hinduisation has been so gradual and accomplished through the course of so many centuries that the vast masses of Hindus do not practically understand its significance. But the problem assumes a tangible form when the cumulative result of centuries finds expression in the figures of the Indian census for 1931 according to which out of every 1000 of India's vast population 682 are Hindus, 222 Muslims, 36 Buddhists, 24 followers of tribal religions, 18 Christians and 18 belong to other religions like Sikhism. It is true that from the purely spiritual point of view the numbers that claim to follow a religion has very little significance. But Hinduism is not only a way of salvation; it is a culture as well, and for a culture, with its distinctive ideals, both secular and spiritual, the numerical strength of the society that embodies it is certainly an important consideration. All the cultural elements that India can claim to be distinctively her own, are Hindu in origin and can

flourish only under the stimulating influence of Hindu religious ideals. For those therefore who believe that India has got a substantial contribution to make towards world culture, the preservation of Hindu society which forms, as it were, the body of Indian culture becomes a matter of very great importance. It is from this point of view that we draw the attention of the reader to the fact that at the present day Hindus form only 682 out of every 1,000 of India's population whereas several centuries ago India was almost cent per cent Hindu.

In the past it was Islam that used to take away large numbers of Hindus as converts; but to-day the position has changed, and Christianity has become the centre towards which seceders are gravitating. It is a well-known fact that the large majority of Christian converts are drawn from the sections of Hindus described as Depressed Classes and Hill tribes.

The ban of untouchability placed on these people by the high caste Hindus, the very loose nature of their connection with the rest of Hindu society, and the fact that genuine Hindu religious ideals have very little permeated among them—all these conspire to make these classes a very fruitful field of activity for Christian Missions working in India. This fact is borne out by the statements of the missionaries themselves. Dr. Whitehead, lately Bishop of Madras, says: "Ninety years ago it was almost the universal opinion among the leading missionaries in India and their supporters at Home that the important thing to do for the spread of Christianity was to educate the Brahmins and high caste Hindus in cities and towns, so that, when they were converted, Christian truth might spread out from

the cities to the villages and permeate downwards from the top to the bottom of society. Experience has proved that Christianity is destined to spread in India in exactly the opposite way. The Christian Church has been steadily and rapidly built up, not in the cities and towns, but in the remote village districts and mainly among the poor outcastes." According to the same authority, "the outcastes of Hindu society are being gathered into the fold of the church at the rate of 2,000 a week." He expects this rate to increase much more in the future. "To-day," he remarks, "it is a mass movement, to-morrow it will be an avalanche." There is nothing to falsify this prediction, unless the Hindus make a strenuous effort to absorb these classes into their society and permeate them with Hindu religious ideals.

### **The Pre-disposing Cause**

It is often pointed out that the ignorance and poverty of the lower class Hindus is responsible for their falling victims to the propagandist activities of the Christian missionaries. There seems to be very little truth in this belief. For, if this is the reason for mass conversions from Hinduism, why is it that Islam has been so conspicuously immune from the proselytising zeal of Christian missionaries. From the point of view of education and wealth, the poor classes among the Muslims are not much better off than the lower strata of Hindu society, and yet the activities of the Christian missionaries among them have borne so little fruit that they have well nigh given up the hope of converting the Muslims. It is worth while for the modern Hindu

to enquire what constitutes that bulwark of Islam against which all the batterings of Christian enthusiasts have been in vain. A study of Muslim society will show that the strength of Islam in this respect consists in the fact that there is much greater cultural contact between the upper and lower strata of Muslim community, and that as a result even the poorest and the most ignorant of Muslims is made to mentally participate and feel pride in the achievements of his religion and community. This is the very thing that Hindu society lacks so woefully and for which it is paying the penalty at the present time. The untouchable classes have hitherto been allowed to occupy only the fringes of Hindu society, and have never been given an opportunity to participate in the higher cultural achievements of Hinduism. They are utterly oblivious of, and therefore feel no pride in, India's millenniums of civilisation and the long line of sages and saints of which the higher caste Hindus are so justly proud. What is more, into this mentality of the outcaste having no intimate sense of identification with Hindu culture, are entering modern democratic ideas which reveal to him by contrast the injustice of the stigma of untouchability attached to him. In the presence of these two pre-disposing causes, one positive and the other negative, what wonder is there in people of this class responding to the promise of redemption, material and spiritual that Christian missionaries are offering to them?

But to-day the situation has received a new complexion owing to the refusal of influential sections of

Hindus to move with the times. In early days there used to be only individual conversions or conversion of families. Of late we are often hearing of mass conversions, and what is still more remarkable, there is at present a movement among the Depressed Classes themselves to change their faith without any inducement from missionaries of other religions. When the feeling of self-respect is roused in man, he gives up the attitude of passive submission to oppression. Casting aside the meekness of patient suffering, he develops a keen consciousness of injustice. The progress of ideas during the last two decades has engendered this mentality among the Depressed Classes, and that is why out of a feeling of despair with regard to their social future in the Hindu fold they are to-day suggesting that their whole community should give up Hinduism. The die-hards of Hinduism, with their curious 10th century mentality and social outlook, are, as it were, driving these people to other religions, not so much in quest of the redemption of their souls as in a desperate effort for the salvation of their society.

To conclude, therefore, the most prominent features of Hinduism to-day are on the one hand the dwindling of the spiritual energy of the race due to the decay of the sacrificial conception of life, and on the other the threat of social disintegration arising from the mass conversions of Hindu outcastes into other religions. In our next issue we shall consider under the heading "Aggressive Hinduism" what measures Hinduism of the future is to adopt in order to combat these forces.



## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

*By A Disciple*

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was both wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and was respected and worshipped like a Goddess by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of this great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of every-day life.]

**W**E, a few friends, started from Shillong for Jayrambati, to pay our respects to the Holy Mother. We had all seen the photograph of the Holy Mother, taken at an earlier period of her life. One of us, during the trip, dreamed of the present appearance of the Mother. Later on we were all overcome with joy and surprise to find that the dream vision of the Mother actually tallied with her present appearance. One of us had been previously initiated by a monk. Referring to his initiation, the Holy Mother said, "You have got the sacred word from a monk. That will illumine your soul." All of us, excepting him, were initiated by the Mother. After the initiation we expressed our desire to go to Kamar-pukur, and begged her permission to go there. The Mother said, "How is it possible? I want to feed my children well to-day." I thought it proper to ask the Mother as to what I should do, after the initiation, for my further spiritual advancement. I asked her, "Mother, what else should I do?"

Mother : You need not do anything.

Disciple : Must I not do anything else?

Mother : No.

Disciple : Nothing else whatsoever?

Mother : No, nothing else whatsoever.

Three times she gave the same answer in the negative, and I then realised that as she had been gracious enough to be my spiritual teacher, therefore she also must have taken the entire responsibility for relieving me from the bondage of worldliness.

One day I looked at Bhanu Pishi's\* palm, and said, "Aunt, you will live twenty-five years more." She reported it to the Mother, saying, "Mother, your child knows palmistry." The mother sent for me and said, "Can you read the lines on the palm? Can you tell me if my rheumatic pain will be cured?" I was completely surprised at this question. I did not know anything of astrology or palmistry. I had made that remark to Bhanu Pishi in a most casual way. I had heard previously that the Mother was suffering from this rheumatism of the leg on account of her accepting the sins of others vicariously. I said to her, "You have been suffering for us alone. How can you be cured, as long as we are alive?" No sooner had she heard these words than she became extremely mortified and suddenly sat on the ground exclaiming, "Goodness! What does he say?" I was totally puzzled at this plight of the Mother and asked, "Well, Mother,

\* A woman living in the neighbourhood of the Holy Mother's house, who was a contemporary of Sri Ramakrishna.

would you like to be cured?" She answered in the affirmative. "Then you must be cured," I added. She again became cheerful and said after a moment, "Look at their devotion. They realise that everything depends upon my will."

Before returning to our native place, I prostrated before the Mother and said, "Mother, I cannot count the numbers at the time of repeating the beads. If my fingers move, my tongue remains silent. When my hands and tongue become active, the mind does not remain steady."

The Mother said in reply, "You will find later on, that your fingers and tongue will remain inactive, but the mind will continue to think of God."

\* \* \*

It was the time of the Durga Puja at Belur Math, in 1916. The Holy Mother came to the Math on the first day of the festival and stayed in the adjacent garden-house, to the north of the monastery. Next day, she came to the Math to see the image. The monks and the Brahmanacharins were cutting vegetables, next to the kitchen. Referring to them, the Mother said, "I see that my children know this work very well." Swami Jagadananda said, "The one goal of our life is to please the Divine Mother. It does not make any difference with us if we achieve this goal through meditation and prayer, or through cutting vegetables."

That day people without number prostrated before the Holy Mother. She was washing her feet in the Ganges water again and again. Jogin-Ma said to her, "Goodness, Mother, what are you doing? You will catch cold." The Mother said in reply, "Well,

Jogin, how can I explain it to you? Some people touch my feet and that refreshes me wonderfully. Again there are others who, when they touch my feet, make me feel a terrible burning sensation. I do not find any relief unless I touch the water of the Ganges."

One day later, in the course of conversation, I said to the Mother, "Mother, once during the Durga Puja you told us that when some persons touch your feet, you experience pain."

Mother: Yes, my child, there are some people whose touching of my feet makes me feel as if I were stung by a wasp, but I never tell them about it.

Then she looked at us with great tenderness and said, "But I do not mean my children like you." I said, "Well, Mother, we always feel that we have not been able to achieve anything even though we have the blessing of a Mother like you."

Mother: Do not be afraid, my child. Always keep it in your mind that Sri Ramakrishna is protecting you. I am also always with you. Why should you fear anything when you have a mother like me? Sri Ramakrishna once said to me, 'I shall lead to the goal by hand those who will come to you.' Do whatever you like, live as you please. Sri Ramakrishna must come at the end for your liberation. God has given you limbs and organs. They must play their part. They must do their function.

One day I was about to offer food before the image of Sri Ramakrishna, when I noticed a ray of light coming from the picture and touching the offering. I therefore asked the Mother, "Is what I saw a mere hal-

lucination pure and simple, or real? If it be a hallucination, please make my nerves quiet." The Mother thought for a while and said, "No, child, it is all true."

Devotee : Do you feel all these things.

Mother : Yes.

Devotee : When I offer food before Sri Ramakrishna and you, does Sri Ramakrishna accept it? Do you also accept it?

Mother : Yes.

Devotee : How shall I know it?

Mother : Why, have you not read in the Gita that whatever you offer to God with devotion, a fruit or a flower or a little water, He accepts?

I was surprised at this reply and said, "Are you then God?" The Mother laughed outright at these words. We also laughed.

\* \* \*

It was in Jayrambati that I went to see the Mother one evening.

Disciple : Mother, everybody says that we must pray for something under a Kalpataru.\* But we are your children. What special wish should children make before the mother? The mother knows what is good for her children and she always gives them what is for their good. As Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'The mother cooks different dishes for her different children according to their power of digestion.' Now, Mother, what is best for me?

Mother : How little intelligence does a man possess? He may require one thing but he asks for another. He starts to mould an image of Shiva but he ends by making that of a monkey. It is best therefore to sur-

render all desires at the feet of God. He will do whatever is best for us. But one may pray for devotion and detachment. These cannot be classed as desires.

Disciple : Mother, Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'This is the last birth of those who come to me.' But Swami Vivekananda says, 'No one can be liberated without Sannyasa; that is, without taking the monastic vows.' If that be true, then what will be the fate of the householders?

Mother : Yes, my child, both of them are right. For the householders it is not necessary to take any external vow of renunciation. They naturally will get the inner renunciation. But it is necessary for some to take those external vows. Why should you fear anything? Always take shelter at his feet, and also remember that Sri Ramakrishna is protecting you.

Once I told my mother that I wished to take her to Benares on a pilgrimage, but she did not agree to it because the time was not auspicious.† I spoke about it to the Holy Mother. In reply she said, "My child, they say that a pilgrimage to the holy places at an improper time destroys the merit of previous virtues. But this also is true: one should carry out all pious intentions as soon as possible." I could not grasp the meaning of this statement, which apparently had a twofold significance. Seeing my confusion, she said, "In the opinion of worldly men, it is not proper to visit a holy place at an inauspicious time. It is true that one may put off such a pious intention in considering the propriety or impro-

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\* A heavenly tree of Hindu mythology which fulfils whatever wish one makes under it.

† According to the orthodox Hindu belief, certain months of the year are not auspicious for making a pilgrimage.

priety of the time, but Death does not make any distinction of time. As Death is always uncertain, one should carry out virtuous wishes whenever the opportunity presents itself, without waiting for a particular time."

One of my friends died in the hospital in a very helpless condition. I

wrote to the Mother about his pious character and devotion to God, and I begged her to pray for his liberation. The Holy Mother wrote to me in reply, "I pray to God that your friend may attain liberation. May Sri Ramakrishna remove all his bondage."

## THE PROBLEM OF EVIL IN DIVINE CREATION

*By Prof. Akshayakumar Banerjia, M.A.*

*(Continued from the last issue)*

[Mr. Banerjia is the Professor of Philosophy in Anandamohan College, Mymensingh, Bengal. He tackles in this article the most vexed question in the philosophy of religion, namely, the problem of evil in a divinely constituted world-order. It is a problem that has engaged the attention of the best thinkers from the very dawn of religious and philosophical thought, but being one of those ultimate questions relating to the very foundations of life, it has never received a solution that will satisfy the intellect unamenable to the influence of faith. Nevertheless Prof. Banerjia's re-statement of the problem and the various solutions of it from different points of view together with his own suggestions for overcoming the difficulty will be found highly stimulating and instructive.]

THE difficulty in meeting such objections has led those rationalist thinkers to conceive of the ultimate ground of the universe as devoid of all moral attributes,—as absolutely indifferent to good and evil, happiness and misery, virtue and vice. They think that the source of the world is a non-moral or supra-moral principle, whose nature it is manifest Himself in an orderly phenomenal world without any purpose in view, good or bad. Good and evil, virtue and vice, happiness and misery, are present only to the finite sentient and rational beings and are the products of the relations and interactions among them and among the forces and laws operating within this world. God has nothing to do with them. The very conceptions of good and evil, virtue and vice, beauty and ugliness, happiness and misery are absent from

the supra-moral consciousness of the Author of the universe.

Such a conception of non-moral and impersonal God, indifferent to good and evil of the world, is of course inconsistent with the theistic conception of God and is regarded as incapable of satisfying the religious and moral demands of human nature. If this doctrine represents the true character of God, then He cannot be an object of worship and reverence to moral and spiritual beings. If the world has no moral purpose inherent in it, it is not truly a fit habitation for moral and spiritual beings. This conclusion is actually accepted by a class of thinkers who hold that the existence in the world is evil by itself and that to get rid of evil we have to get rid of existence itself.

The believers in the unimpeachable goodness of the Divine Creator, how-

ever, adopt various means to justify the presence of the apparent evils in the moral scheme of the universe. Some pious thinkers are of opinion that justice is the most fundamental moral attribute, and this attribute, though tempered with mercy, God possesses in perfection. Enjoyments and sufferings are given to His creatures as rewards and punishments for their virtues and vices. Though some of the greatest men even of the present day have tried to interpret some of the most horrible physical catastrophes of the recent times in terms of divine punishment for human sins, can we reasonably maintain that such explanations really contribute to the solution of the general problem. First, only rational beings endowed with the gift of freedom of choice can be held responsible for their conduct and character, and justice can have reference to them alone. But natural calamities, physical disorders and cries of agony among the living creatures had been prevalent even before the birth of mankind in the world, and even now we witness the sufferings of the irrational creatures for no fault for which we or God can hold them responsible. Secondly, the Author of the physical and mental constitution of human creatures cannot reasonably disown the responsibility for the passions and propensities which drive them to the perpetration of wrong deeds.

Another school of thought, while maintaining the absolute goodness of the Divine Author of the universe, proclaims that "physical catastrophes have their inevitable and exclusive origin in certain combination of physical facts." It adds that "unless we believe in the inexorableness of universal laws, in the working of which

God Himself never interferes; . . we find it impossible to justify His ways on occasions like the one which has sorely stricken us in an overwhelming manner and scale. If we associate ethical principles with cosmic phenomena, then we shall have to admit that human nature is normally superior to the Providence that preaches lessons on good behaviour in orgies of the worst behaviour possible." But this contrivance for the exoneration of our loving and merciful Providence from the responsibility for physical catastrophes and the dissociation of ethical principles from cosmic phenomena cannot be accepted by the thorough-going theistic thinkers, who maintain that not even a leaf can move or a sparrow can whisper without His knowledge and will. If God, having created the world, has left it to the operations of the inexorable universal laws, is He not responsible for these laws themselves, and also for His non-influence, even when a certain combination of physical facts in accordance with those laws tends to "imperil the integrity of His own creation"? Or has He deprived Himself of the power or the right to interfere, and willingly became finite in that respect? Is such self-limitation consistent with His being the sole absolute Creator and Ruler of the Universe and his immanence in creation? Is His wilful non-interference consistent with His infinite love and mercy?

Another class of thinkers, dissatisfied with the above doctrines, has recourse to the 'Instrumental' or 'Medicinal' theory of evil. They hold that the finite spirits are created for their progressive self-development and ultimate realisation of the highest good inherent in Divine Nature, and

they have been placed in a world designed for goading, encouraging and assisting them in this direction. Calamity and prosperity, misery and happiness, vice and virtue, are equally necessary and useful instruments designed for the realisation of this ideal in divine creation. For instance, the feeling of pain and the struggle for getting rid of it are suitable means for the development of the inherent powers and superior qualities in the living beings and for their ascent to higher and higher planes for existence, knowledge and action. No better arrangement for the evolution of such a variety of species of beings can be suggested even for an omnipotent and omniscient Creator to adopt. This instrumental value is attached not only to physical and mental pain, but also to sins or moral failures, to which man is liable. When we reflect upon human progress from the ethical and spiritual point of view, it becomes evident that this progress depends upon the self-disciplined exercise of freedom, and this freedom is the most valuable gift bestowed upon man by His creator. Freedom implies liability to commit errors, acquisition of wisdom and strength through failures, struggle with temptations and passions, etc. An ancient writer thinks, "It is difficulties which show what men really are. Therefore, when a difficulty falls upon you, remember that God, like a trainer of wrestlers, has matched you with a rough young man. For what purpose? you may say. Why, that you may become an Olympic conqueror; but it is not accomplished without sweat?"

A modern writer glorifies pain and suffering in these terms. "It is of incalculable use in correcting and disciplining the spirit. It serves to

soften the hardness of heart, to subdue the proud, to produce fortitude and patience, to expand the sympathies, to exercise the religious affections, to refine, strengthen and elevate the entire disposition. To come out pure gold, the character must pass through the furnace of affliction. And no one who has borne suffering *aright* has ever complained that he had been called on to endure too much of it. On the contrary, all the noblest of our race have learned from experience to count suffering not as an evil but a privilege, to rejoice in it as working out in them, through its purifying and perfecting power, an eternal right of glory." Thus to the noblest hearts pain itself appears as an evidence of love and mercy of the Creator and Ruler of the world. The afflictions which befall the individuals are designed not only to contribute to their own perfection, but to the happiness and glory of the whole race.

The possibility of vice is a necessary concomitant of morality and is an evidence of the truth that the world is a moral order. "Character consists in right choice, for which opportunity does not exist unless wrong choice is simultaneously possible." If what we now appreciate as good and conceive as the ideal were of necessity present in the world as an accomplished fact, it would not be estimated as good or ideal at all. The very essence of goodness flies at the touch of necessity. The very conceptions of truth, beauty, holiness, blessedness would have been absent if they were mere matters of fact, if there were no falsehood, deformity, vice and suffering in the world. In that case the world would have been devoid of all its glories, man would have been deprived of all his excellen-

ces. We can conceive of no greatness, no goodness, no love and sympathy, no search after truth, no admiration for beauty, no reverence for perfection, except on the background of pettiness and sinfulness, poverty and affliction, ignorance and ugliness, failures and imperfections. The greatest, the noblest, the most sublime and beautiful characters in the world—of whom we are all proud and the memories of whom give us happiness—are those that have undergone the bitterest sorrows and pains for the realisation of the highest ideal, and that have laid down their lives for the relief of the sufferings of other men and creatures.

We are not, however, left to struggle perpetually with hostile forces and take our chance in a chaotic world. The mental constitution of men as well as the conditions of the world is so planned that it is impossible for any man, in spite of his freedom, to continue in the path of vice for ever. God has made vice self-destructive. Vice works out its own defeat, disgrace and destruction, and virtue, as the immanent ideal, being the foundation of the order and harmony of the world process, must always reign as the ideal and realise itself in the long run. The intrinsic beauty and glory of virtue, the all-conquering power and all-comprehending truth of goodness, exhibit themselves brightly on the background of vice defeated, temptations and passions fully overcome, pains and sufferings smilingly accepted. It is a wonderful arrangement, which, having given full freedom to the finite spirits to violate the divine moral law and having associated pain with violation and pleasure with obedience, almost insensibly develops their

character so as to make them the glorious conquerors of the world of relativity and finitude and to lead them on to attain and enjoy the perfection and blessedness of the infinite and absolute divine nature. This is the eternal glory of Divine Providence as manifested in His creation.

However plausible and encouraging the doctrine may appear to be, when we put it to the test of our actual experience, we find strong grounds for disbelieving it. How can we believe that the terrible earthquakes, cyclones, tornadoes, epidemics, etc., killing, destroying, sweeping away the achievements of centuries and perpetrating various kinds of unthinkable cruelties, are necessary instruments for the realisation of the infinite goodness and beauty, happiness and bliss, of divine nature in His creation? An overwhelming amount of suffering does not appear to contribute to any higher good whatsoever, but rather checks the progress already made and gives a backward motion. That the sins and moral depravities of the most heinous sort, which we come across in the human race, are the necessary conditions of men's ethical and spiritual development, is an assertion which requires a good deal of credulous faith to be accepted as true.

To such objections the pious philosophers reply that we should not place too much reliance upon our limited experience. The world, to be properly understood, has to be taken as a whole. The world is an organic unity, in which the past, the present and the future, the nearest and the most remote, are united in one whole, and in which one supreme central ideal, eternally present in the mind of one omnipotent infinite Divine Per-

sonality, is being realised through progressive stages. One life-power pervades the whole and every part of the universe. It is from the standpoint of this whole universe that the worth and utility of everything in it is to be judged, and from this standpoint there is nothing in the world which is unnecessary and useless.

The problem of evil in divine creation appears to have baffled all attempts for solution on account of a fundamental misconception underlying the problem itself. It is assumed once for all that pain and sin are evils, and then the question is raised, how can the presence of evils be consistent with the goodness and omnipotence of the Creator? What is the true meaning of evil? It means that which ought not to exist, that which is demonstrably against the realisation of the highest ideal. It requires to be proved that the temporary physical and mental sufferings undergone and the sins and crimes committed by the finite creatures are incompatible with the ideal immanently working itself out in the universe, before they can be condemned as evils. Good and evil are, unlike happiness and misery, moral conceptions, and they are to be applied to facts by reference to the Supreme Ideal.

We ordinarily take for granted that goodness consists in the satisfaction of the demands of our sensuous nature, that the sensuous nature of the finite creatures stands at the centre of the world process and has an inherent right to determine the course of the nature of the universe, and that the creation is or ought to be based on the hedonistic principle. Happiness enjoyed by the sentient creatures is thus regarded as the criterion of

good conduct on the part of the universe or the Author of the universe. We forget that good and evil are moral conceptions, and that they should be estimated not by reference to what we desire actually at the present stage of our development, but by reference, from our standpoint, to what we ought to desire as the highest ideal of life, *i.e.*, the perfect fulfilment of our existence, and, from the divine standpoint, to the perfect manifestation of the infinite riches of divine character in the phenomenal world.

When we refer to the experiences of men at different stages of intellectual, moral and spiritual development, we find that their judgments upon the phenomena of nature substantially differ. As men rise to higher and higher planes of culture, their outlook becomes more and more refined and comprehensive and they attain higher and higher conceptions of good, by reference to which they estimate the worth and necessity of the different kinds of phenomena in the physical, sentient and rational nature. It is in the lowest physical plane that the criterion of value is pleasure or happiness. In the moral plane of thought, all the physical sufferings and the mental agonies, all the catastrophes in the external nature and the disasters in the human race, appear as good and beautiful and expressions of divine mercy, in proportion as they are found to be suitable means and contrivances for the progressive development and perfection of the moral character and outlook of the finite creatures and for the varied expression of the glories of the divine character. From the standpoint of the moral ideal immanent in the



world, the world as a whole and in all its departments appears to be a contrivance for moral and spiritual discipline—for “divine education”—for the gradual awakenment, self-emancipation and self-perfection of the finite spirits and their ultimate self-identification with the Absolute Spirit. All worldly phenomena are the contrivances for the revelation, exhibition, demonstration and glorification of the power, greatness, goodness, purity, beauty and blessedness of the spirits, in relation to, and in interaction with various orders of circumstances. All finite spirits have been placed in such situations and relations, in the midst of such friendly and apparently hostile forces,—such struggles and agonies, passions and temptations, successes and failures, enjoyments and sufferings,—as may be of value to them to call forth their inherent powers and glories and to develop in them the aspiration and the capacity for the realisation of the divine infinity and perfection in themselves by dint of their own free efforts. The sufferings, failures, calamities, etc., appear in sublime, beautiful, brilliant and glorified forms, when viewed from this higher moral plane, because they are the mirrors on which the inner glories of the self-perfecting spirits are reflected ; they are the backgrounds which brighten and enrich their self-expressions ; they furnish the measures for the estimation of their essential greatness.

But there is a still higher point of view, from which these worldly phenomena can be, and actually have been observed. When the highest spiritual plane of experience and outlook is reached, and the world is looked upon from the most comprehensive viewpoint, it no longer appears

even as a ‘divine education’ for the progressive attainment of a perfect ideal, but it reveals itself as the embodiment of the perfect character of God. The whole universe is experienced as the glorious manifestation of Truth, Beauty and Goodness of Divine Character, as the expression of Divine Bliss in diversified forms. “It is from the character of Absolute *Ananda* (Bliss) that all these phenomenal existences have emanated, it is by Absolute *Ananda*, which is immanent in them, that they are being sustained, it is towards Absolute *Ananda* that they are all moving and it is in Absolute *Ananda* that they are ultimately merged.” This is the experience of the *Rishi* of the Upanishad. The whole universe is pervaded by *Ananda*. “Who could have lived, who could have breathed, if the whole space were not pervaded by Bliss ?” Not only is there no evil, but also there is no error or deformity in this divine universe. *Ananda* is its beginning, middle and end. *Ananda* or the self-enjoyment of the absolutely true, good and beautiful God is at the root of the creation, and is immanent in all the phenomena of the world. What we call evils, what we call catastrophes, what we call miseries and what we call vices, on account of our ignorance and narrow outlook, are also the self-expressions of the Divine *Ananda*, the Divine Perfection. It is from this highest spiritual point of view alone that the apparently insoluble problem of evil in the divine creation is finally solved, and for the purpose of this final solution of the problem, we have to rise above this present sense-ridden plane of our outlook and learn to participate in the Divine outlook by ascending to the

highest spiritual plane by dint of the necessary intellectual, moral and spiritual discipline. We then actually witness the rhythmic movements of *Siva's dance* in all that happens in the phenomenal world.

(Concluded)

## MEDITATIONS

By Anil Baran Ray

[Mr. Anil Baran Ray is a Sadhaka of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, and is a noted exponent of Sri Aurobindo's teachings. In these meditations he sheds much light on several difficult problems of spiritual life.]

### I

#### DIVINE GRACE

**I** AM my worst enemy, Mother ; no one can help me unless I help myself ; Thy Grace is always there to respond to sincere and earnest call, it can work wonders in us, but it will not act unless the full support of our own will is forthcoming.

Hostile forces lie in wait all around us ; the more they are rejected the more insistent they become ; driven away from the front door, they seek to enter by the back ; they know only too well our defects and points of weakness, and are always prompt to take advantage of them ; they come in all guises and with all gifts and promises acceptable to us. They can overtake the most vigilant, and one can never be wholly safe from their attack unless and until one is fully changed and transformed.

But they cannot hide their falsehood before sincere seeking and aspiration ; they cannot bear the light of truth, they cannot stand before resolute will. The Divine Grace is always there to protect those who sincerely seek its protection.

Thou knowest fully my defects and weakness, Mother ; I have taken my absolute refuge in Thee. If thou dost not bear with me in patience and save

me from my own ignorance and weakness—to whom shall I turn? Save Thy child, Mother ; give me more light, more strength to my will ; support me with Thy Grace while I sincerely try to keep my temple clean and pure for Thy abiding Presence.

### II

#### DIFFICULTIES ON THE PATH

All difficulties and obstacles can be so used as to be of great help to us in our *sadhana*. We are tested by difficulties, they point out the defects and imperfections in us, they rouse us from the inert passivity and lethargy into which we are constantly apt to fall ; they exercise and strengthen the powers of self-conquest in us.

If our action brings failure or disaster on us, we have only to thank ourselves, for the Divine Mother is always there to help us, to guide us, and it is entirely our own fault if we turn away from Her and obey our egoistic whims and desires.

If we suffer from doubts and misgivings, we can be sure that there are still obscure and dark corners in us where the divine light has not been brought in and we should open these more and more to the Divine Mother. If ever we feel dull or dry, if sorrow or misery overtake us, we can be sure that there are still parts in us which

hanker after the lower joys of life and thus cut us off from the perennial stream of *ananda* that is flowing all around us.

Thus our difficulties and obstacles are our great aids, they can always be utilised as stepping stones in our upward march, and they are often intended to be such by our Divine Friend and Guide, by the kind and Graceful Mother.

\* \* \*

Through the touch of Thy Grace, Mother, difficulties turn into opportunities and the very obstacles and defects in our nature turn into aids and virtues.

The inertia of our nature is a great obstacle to our progress ; but by sincere aspiration this inertia is turned into deep peace and firmness, established in which we can remain undisturbed by all events and circumstances in life and refuse to be moved by anything else but a direct impulse from Thyself.

The hankering in our nature for constant activity and struggle is a great obstacle to our progress but by the touch of Thy Grace it turns into strength of will and alertness and a determination to conquer absolutely all defects, all falsehood in our nature.

The movements of our thought and reasoning are a great obstacle to our progress and hide the truth from us ; but when dedicated to Thy service they serve as a test, as a solvent which will continually help us to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

Thus if we can sincerely dedicate all our powers and activities to Thy service and turn our whole being

towards Thyself, Mother, all our defects will turn into virtues, all obstacles into aids.

### III

#### FAITH

Faith, it is said, can move mountains. The great and difficult task of raising our human nature into the divine can be accomplished only by genuine and living faith.

A flame which flickers at every blast of wind cannot lead us very far. If we do not possess a living faith in our divine possibilities, we shall never rise above our human limitations. A faith that does not enter into every part of our being and does not influence all our life, all our thoughts and activities—a passive, weak and wavering faith is powerless to achieve anything great or glorious.

We must then keep the torch of true and pure faith brightly burning in us at all times. Whenever doubts and misgivings assail us, we must at once recognise them to be movements of falsehood and sternly reject them. Whenever our flame grows weaker we must open ourselves to the Divine Mother who is the eternal source of all fire and light. Doubts and misgivings, desires and attachments to the lower life, egoistic ambitions and selfish narrowness and jealousy are great enemies of our progress—they rule in the lower consciousness ; we must rise above them and live continually in the pure consciousness of faith, light and devotion. A man becomes what his faith is. Living constantly in sincere faith and pure aspiration we shall steadily and inevitably grow into the greatness of the divine life.

# EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

*By Ernest Champness*

[Mr. Ernest Champness is the author of "The Significance of Life," and is closely associated with the National Adult School Union of London which has under it 29 County Unions comprising upwards of 1,200 Adult Schools. He is also engaged in the preparation of an Indian Adult School Handbook for the use of groups interested in such work in this country. In the present article he voices the increasing distrust of many people in the West in the capacity of science to solve the most intimate problems of life, and pleads for developing a special method of experimenting with the internal life of man. Is not this method described by him as 'Experimental Philosophy' the same as what we in India call Sadhana or spiritual practice?]

**T**HE Experimental Method has been used in the West by science workers with striking success. By a combination of theoretical analysis and synthesis and practical experimentation the wonders of modern science and engineering have been achieved. A long procession of thinkers and experimenters have advanced into the secrets of nature and have revealed some of nature's hidden structure. Some of these have been painstaking and cautious workers, while others have been brilliant speculators. The importance of all this work is not only that the aeroplane has made rapid transit possible and by the radio men's voices are conveyed to the distant parts of the earth ; but perhaps, even more striking are the results of investigations which at present show small practical results : one thinks of the prediction of the movements of the planets and of our ability to weigh, measure and analyse stars which are thousands of light-years distant.

Such facts as these suggest that the Universe is a rational whole ; that the human reason has the power to understand its structure. Kepler, one of the greatest of the early science workers, sums up his work in wonder : "Oh God ! I think again Thy thoughts after Thee !" Robert

Browning, in quite another context, sings :

Rejoice, we are allied

To That which doth provide.

Such words, in different ways, express our natural belief in the Eternal Reason, which our finite minds feebly grasp in those disciplined gropings which we call science. We might have expected that the results of scientific research would have lead to a deep conviction of the adequacy of reason to solve the problems of life—rationalism in the full and proper sense of the term. During a portion of the 19th century such an attitude was adopted in some quarters, but now in 1935 such a rationalism seems somewhat remote and unrelated to the world and its many unsolved problems, and to some people even a little fantastic. Why this change ? Why this failure to accept the implications of our scientific thought ? Why do people believe in reason up to a certain point and beyond that profess to be irrationalists ? There are many questions which it is difficult to answer, but I believe that the ones which I have just asked are not of this kind. Broadly speaking, I suggest that the following explanations go to the root of this matter :

1. Modern physics rests upon mathematics, and the convic-

tion has come to many science workers that the mathematics which has been so fruitful is a somewhat arbitrary and artificial construction.

2. The failure to create a more enlightened economic order and a more peaceful system of society. The high post-war ideals have met with a most stubborn resistance from human nature, which fact suggests to many the presence of a large non-rational element in our 'make up'. The bombing aeroplane, with its load of poison gas, like a huge note of interrogation rushing through the sky, is the symbol of our disquiet. Why have we used our best brains to create this evil thing.
3. The New Psychology has shown that actions which profess to spring from reason are often dictated by suppressed instincts seeking expression in action.
4. The study of Abnormal Psychology has revealed that there are many phenomena which do not readily fit into any rational scheme known to us.

Thus there has been born in the West a mistrust, often exaggerated, in reason as an instrument of knowledge. At the same time, in spite of much that may suggest otherwise, there is in the West a wistful longing after the things of the spirit : to worship if we cannot know : to have the immediate knowledge of intuition if a more articulated philosophy be denied. It may be noted here that these modern anti-intellectual tendencies have both strengthened and weakened the defences of religion. In the attack on rationalism those defences of reli-

gion which are based on a faith in reason have been undermined. A denial of reason is destructive of any belief in God which is based on the conclusions of our finite thinking. On the other hand, the denial of the validity of our rational thought does relieve religion from attack by those whose instruments of war are taken from the arsenal of reason.

Thinkers in the West are opening their minds to see new vistas leading to a philosophy of life—a philosophy in which there is room for spiritual adventure and in which a spiritual approach is made to spiritual problems. This newer attitude I have described as 'Experimental Philosophy'. To the various sciences its attitude is one of wondering admiration for past achievements and an expectant open-mindedness for the future. The natural sciences have been built up on careful and repeated experiments. This fundamental method must be taken over by the exponents of an Experimental Philosophy, but with a most important distinction. Each particular science uses the thought-forms which it finds most suited to its subject matter. Great limitation and lack of clarity arises when one science borrows the thought-forms of another science. When, for instance, the biologist takes over the concepts of the chemists, he does so at the expense of a restriction of his power to describe biological happenings. Experimental Philosophy must follow the sciences by being experimental, but the experiments which it makes must be its own experiments, and its attempted description of the results must be expressed in language which is the least inadequate for the purpose of describing the Divine-human quest. The Experimental

Philosopher will seek to create the most serviceable forms of investigation and precise verbal expression.

The Experimental Philosopher has to deal with *all* experience ; but, in particular, he is concerned with personality within which all experience which can be known to us is known. Any philosophy, in which the emphasis is placed on personality, must be a philosophy of values, *i.e.*, the good, the true and the beautiful. Life to be appreciated and in part understood must be lived as a venture, as a faith. To break through the arid circumference of life and reach the centre a trust in the spiritual is necessary, a free exercise of our intuitions. We ask : " Is the good life worth while ? " and the answer can come from those alone who have striven and striven to lead the good life themselves. They know the answer in an inner way which the mere observer fails to discover. He can only see some outward indications of the inward experience—the glow is missed. The experiment is with life itself : the passion for social service raised to white heat ; the mother's intense love for her child ; the mystic's emptying his mind and will that he may be a vehicle for the Divine are experiments which we can make with the heart of things, seeking to find a true way of life. In natural science we experiment with external objects, but the Experimental Philosopher must experiment with himself, yet without the self-consciousness of an experimenter, for where this spirit of self-consciousness enters the intensity of the Divine Light becomes dimmed, and when the storms come the lamp may be extinguished—extinguished until relit in some overwhelming experience. Historically considered, such a view of the human

personality as I have been trying to suggest is deeply indebted to the impression made on Western thinkers by the personality of Jesus.

Two articles of faith are based on the above considerations, which are directly related to the purpose of this article, and at the present time they cannot be described as being more than articles of faith.

1. The hope exists that such an Experimental Philosophy in leading us deeper into life's secrets may also lead us to a justification—from a higher point of view—of that intellectualism which some aspect of scientific research seems to indicate, but which has become so largely alien to the modern mind. It may be found, when viewed in the light of inward experience, that the verdict of the intellect is not dissimilar to that of the devout intuitions.
2. Western thinkers in setting out on such a venture of the spirit do not desire to feel that they are engaged in a quest which separates them from thinkers belonging to other traditions and who follow other methods. In the West there is a most sincere wish to appreciate co-workers in the East. If the centre of our problem is, by the full development of the personality, to see—to some partial extent—into the meaning of life and experimentally grasp its significance, then our quest is never isolated nor lonely. Anyone who has a vision of the Eternal Spirit, whether or not he uses our Western philosophic terminology for its

expression, is a co-worker in the divine quest.

In the spirit of such a faith, it is natural for us on the centenary of the birth of Sri Ramakrishna to express our admiration and affection for this saintly son of India. Engineers, when constructing a long tunnel through a mountain, start at reverse ends and work from each end towards the centre where the two portions of the tunnel meet and form one. Such is the faith and hope that at some central point the thinkers of the East and of the West, seeking to reach the same goal in different ways, may meet and realise the unity of the Spirit inspiring and guiding their varying quests. Such an aspiration for unity stands in no opposition to the cravings of a people for the pre-

servation of what is best in its cultural history. India and the West have much to give each other, and in order that these gifts may be of value to the recipients there is much that is precious in each culture to preserve. In the West a great struggle is taking place in men's souls. What is to be the dominant factor in the West—a hard mechanised civilisation; or a complex whole formed of northern strenuousness, scientific thoroughness, open-mindedness and veracity, and the idealism of Jesus? In the East the problem presents a different outward form, but how far is its inner spirit the same? Should not the thinkers and seekers of the East and the West act as comrades with mutual respect?

## THE DIVINE LIFE

*By Swami Yatiswarananda*

[Swami Yatiswarananda, formerly head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, is at present in Switzerland preaching Vedanta in different countries of Europe. The following paragraphs are sections from the introduction to his forthcoming book entitled "The Divine Life," which consists of selections from Hindu scriptures setting forth both the theory and practice of spiritual life.]

### SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

**T**HE phenomenon of spiritual awakening is witnessed in all the great religions of the world. In the course of man's higher evolution there arises in him a new yearning which may properly be called the hunger of the soul. Because of this new urge the aspirant is not satisfied with the finite and fleeting pleasures of life, physical and mental, but longs for the Eternal and the Infinite which alone can bring nourishment and peace to his hungry soul. We find this fact in some form or other in the Hindu Seer, in the Bud-

dhist Initiate, in the Christian Mystic as well as in the Muslim Sufi. All of them lose the charm for material pleasures and even intellectual enjoyments, and with their whole being hanker after perfection and freedom, although they may follow somewhat different paths of spiritual discipline and culture.

Whether the first spiritual change or 'conversion' is brought about all of a sudden, or by a slow process going on in the soul of the aspirant unknown and unnoticed, there comes to him always a new outlook which was very characteristically expressed in

terms of theism by a great devotee in Ancient India, "Lord, may I think of Thee with that strong love which the ignorant cherish for the things of the world, and may that love never cease to abide in my heart."

In studying the psychology of the spiritual seeker, we find in him not only a new attitude towards the world but also a new outlook on his own self. The worldly-minded identify themselves with the body and care only for the enjoyments of the world. The spiritual aspirant, on the other hand, comes to regard himself as a soul,—whatever his conception of it may be at the beginning,—a spiritual entity dwelling in the body but different from it. And he earnestly wants to come in touch with the "Over-soul", the Divine Principle, the God of the devotee, who, as Sri Ramakrishna realised, is only one but is attainable through many paths of spiritual culture.

#### THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE ETERNAL SELF

The belief in the indestructible and eternal nature of the Self is a most vital point in spiritual life and practice. Empirical sciences, busy with the material aspects of things, are not sufficient to explain life as such. The living body is no doubt a combination of cells as biology tells us, but the principle of life that animates it is something different from the dead matter through which it manifests itself. As Sir Oliver Lodge expressed very clearly, "The behaviour of a ship giving shot and shell is explicable in terms of energy but the discrimination which it exercises between friend and foe is not so explicable. The vagaries of a fire or a cyclone could be predicted by Laplace's calculator,

given the initial positions, velocities and the law of acceleration of the molecules, but no mathematician could calculate the orbit of a common house-fly. Life introduces something incalculable and purposeful amid the laws of physics; it thus distinctly supplements those laws though it leaves them otherwise precisely as they were and obeys them all." There are biologists who go so far as to declare that the brain secretes thought just as the liver secretes bile. Thus according to them mind is a product of matter. But it should not be forgotten that the conception of matter is undergoing a revolutionary change in the thoughts of some of the first class men of science to-day. As the distinguished physicist and astronomer, Sir James Jeans, clearly acknowledges, "The Universe begins to look more like a great thought than a great machine. . . Mind no longer appears as an accidental intruder in the realm of matter. We are beginning to suspect that we ought rather to hail it as the creator and governor of the realm of matter. Not, of course, our individual minds, but the Mind in which the atoms, out of which our individual minds have grown, exist as thoughts."

To the materially-minded the body and the world of matter are realities of the first order. And whatever is taken to be real for the time being, draws the whole soul of man, his thoughts, his feelings as well as his will. As the new factor of Spiritual Consciousness dawns on the seeker after Truth, he comes to doubt the ultimate reality of his body and the world of matter and mind, nay, instinctively he comes to regard his self and the Divine to be more real than the former, and accordingly he re-



acts in an altogether new way in his entire life and thought.

This is pointed out in the Bhagavad-Gita, "The Self is never born, nor does it die. It is not that not having been, It comes into being. It is unborn, eternal, changeless, ever Itself. It is not killed when the body is killed" (II, 20). So the man of Self-realisation gets rid of the fear of death, for having attained to the knowledge of the true Self he has become immortal. Even the sincere believer in the eternal nature of the Self should be free from fear. So says the Bhagavad-Gita again, "This, the Indweller in the bodies of all, is ever indestructible. Therefore thou oughtest not to mourn for any creature" (II, 30). And not only that, "Being steady in the ideal and in the path leading to its realisation, the aspirant should perform his duty, giving up attachment and remaining indifferent to success or failure" (II, 48). Taking refuge in the Lord dwelling in his heart, he should follow the Divine path and approach the ideal more and more.

What is the Self and what again is God? To the theist God is the Indwelling Spirit—the Self of his self. To the monist God alone is his true Self as distinct from the false self he takes to be real before the dawn of the highest spiritual knowledge. In trying to realise his real nature, he finds that what he has been calling his own self is only a shadow of the Reality, that his so-called personality is a reflection of the Eternal Principle and so he becomes one with it. Speaking on this point, Sri Ramakrishna observes, "Know yourself and you shall then know God. What is my ego? Is it my hand or foot or flesh or blood, or any other part of my body? Reflect

well, and you will know that there is no such thing as "I". The more you peel off the skin of an onion, the more skin only appears—you cannot get any kernel; so when you analyse the ego, it vanishes into nothingness. What is ultimately left behind is the Atman (Self)—the pure Chit (Consciousness Absolute). God appears when the ego dies."

#### GOD, SOUL AND UNIVERSE

The three topics—the soul, God and the universe are the most fundamental in all religions and philosophies. The intelligent spiritual aspirant wants to form a clear conception not only of his own soul but also of the soul's relationship with the Divine, and the Divine's and his own connection with the universe. He wants to find the right solution for the enigma of life. So it was but natural that in ancient India the seekers after Truth, perplexed by the mysteries of existence, asked the question "What is the cause of the universe? Whence are we born? Why do we live? Where is our final rest? Under whose command are we subject to happiness and misery?" (Swetaswātara Up.). They pondered deeply over the riddle of the universe and tried to find explanations about it with the help of the intellect and reason. They took up the various possible explanations as to the ultimate cause—time, chance, matter, energy and so on—but rejected them as unsatisfactory. They realised that the final explanation of things cannot be had on the plane of the intellect. So with a view to arrive at the true knowledge by means of intuition or direct experience, they dived into the depths of meditation, and realised through it that everything has its origin in an eternal Self-conscious

Power, called God or Self in religion and philosophy (Swetaswatara Up.)

This idea is graphically expressed in the Mundaka Upanishad, "As the spider produces the thread and absorbs it again, as herbs grow on the earth, as hairs come out spontaneously from man, so does creation spring forth from the Imperishable" (I. 1, 7).

Both the worlds of the living and the non-living have their origin in the One Great Cause. "As from a blazing fire, there shoot out thousands of sparks of the same appearance, so do the various beings originate from the Imperishable, and into it they go back." "From the Imperishable are born also vital energy, the mind, the senses, ether, air, fire, water and also the earth."

Some schools of Hindu Thought may regard the individual self as atomic while others as infinite in its true nature, but all hold that it represents a pure, conscious, and spiritual existence different from mind, senses and body which are its instruments of knowledge and action. Again, the Hindu thinkers do not consider the Self or Atman to be really a created being. It is eternally existent, according to some as an atomic consciousness or according to others as finite consciousness during ignorance but in reality as infinite consciousness, and the texts that speak of its origin imply only its expression or manifestation in the world of mind and matter. And this Self dwells equally in men and all other beings. Only, animals and other creatures are in a lower stage of growth. All will attain their potential Divinity and perfection in the course of evolution and progress.

#### THE IDEAL OF DIVINE REALISATION

In Hinduism religion and philosophy have been inseparable and even

almost synonymous. Both aim at the intuitive vision of the Truth, and fulfil each other. As Prof. Max Muller very truly observes, the two have worked together harmoniously in India alone, where religion derives its breadth of vision from philosophy, and philosophy its spirituality from religion. Religion is the practical form of philosophy, and philosophy the rational form of religion. In Hinduism 'Darsana,' the word usually translated as philosophy, means a system calculated to bring about direct vision or experience of the Truth. The Hindu philosophers were primarily men of spiritual realisation. And therefore their systems, based on transcendental experience, lead to the same goal, if followed with sincerity and devotion. Thus the goal of both religion and philosophy is Self-realisation which the aspirant should strive to attain in this very life.

It is not enough if the aspirant subscribes to doctrines and dogmas with a strong faith. He must also live an intensive higher life and attain to Divine experience in its various aspects. So corresponding to dualistic, qualified non-dualistic and non-dualistic systems of thought there are spiritual experiences in which the devotee realises the Divine Being as his Master, Father, Mother, Friend, or Beloved ; or as the Eternal Principle of which his personality is an eternal mode or part ; or as the One Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute which alone is his true Self and Goal.

Spiritual life is like a never-ending warfare between the higher and lower natures of man. Animal and Divine tendencies are found mysteriously blended in the same individual. And so it is the constant task of the aspir-

ant to eliminate the evil and strengthen the good in him. But he must first of all be able to distinguish the Divine attributes that lead one towards perfection and freedom from the demoniac qualities that increase the soul's ignorance and bondage. In detail does the Bhagavad-Gita speak of this important point—"Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and spiritual practice ; giving away in charity, control of the senses, sacrifice, reading of the Scriptures and uprightness ; non-injuriousness, truthfulness, absence of anger, renunciation, tranquillity, absence of calumny, compassion to beings, non-covetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness, boldness, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, absence of pride,—these belong to one born for a Divine State.

"Ostentation, arrogance and self-conceit, anger as also harshness and ignorance, belong to one who is born for a demoniac state. The Divine State is deemed as making for liberation, the demoniac state for bondage" (XVI, 1-5).

#### THE GUNAS AND HOW TO TRANSCEND THEM

The general classification of men and things into the two groups of good and bad did not satisfy the analytic mind of the Hindu seers. In the course of their examination into the nature of everything, they discovered three primordial stuffs. These three inseparable constituents of Prakriti or Nature transform themselves into ego, mind, senses, bodies and sense-objects. The Gunas manifest themselves both as substance and attributes, something like the primal creative energy expressing itself as both matter and force.

The human personality is a combination of the Self and non-Self consisting of the ego, mind, senses, etc. All that is non-Self belongs to the domain of the Gunas. Knowing the truth that the Self is distinct from the Gunas and their activities, the man of knowledge does not become attached but remains free ; while the ignorant man with his understanding deluded by egoism thinks that he is the doer and so becomes entangled in the world (Bhagavad-Gita II, 27, 28). But it is not possible for the ordinary soul bound by the Gunas to get detached all of a sudden. In order to transcend the Gunas one must know their respective natures, their attributes and manifestations, and also the means to go beyond them. As has been said, the three Gunas are inseparable, but one or the other is predominant particularly in the embodied being and determines his nature. Sattwa is associated with purity, knowledge and happiness ; Rajas with attachment, activity and pain ; Tamas with impurity, ignorance and indolence. The aspirant should overcome Tamas and Rajas by means of Sattwa. In order to do that he should take the food that increases Sattwa, should try also to possess Sattwika knowledge, perform Sattwika worship, gift, austerities and other forms of activities. As his mind is purified of all dross, he beholds no agent other than the Gunas and comes to know the Transcendent Principle which is higher than the Gunas ; he is freed from birth and death and attains to the Immortal State. Sattwa is thus nearer to the Truth but is not the Truth which can be realised only by transcending even Sattwa. But no question of going above it will ever arise unless it has first of all been at-

tained by the seeker. And hence he should try to develop the Sattwa or spiritual elements in him to the best of his power, eliminating all that is impure and unspiritual.

#### SPIRITUAL LIFE—ITS MEANING

Thus spiritual life is one of intense striving. In order to attain to success, the aspirant should be always up and doing. So does the Bhagavad-Gita exhort him — “A man should uplift himself by his own self. So let him not weaken this self. For this self is the friend of oneself, and this self is the enemy of oneself. The self is the friend of the self for him who has conquered himself by this self. But to the unconquered self, the self is inimical and behaves like an eternal foe” (VI: 5, 6).

The life of the seeker after Truth must be dynamic and creative. But this does not mean that it is also to

be standardised in every respect. Freedom being the first condition of growth, he must be able to follow freely the law of his being. According to temperament and capacity, he may pursue the life of selfless activity, or the path of devotion, or the way of sense-control and mental concentration, or the path of self-analysis and knowledge, either singly or jointly. Swami Vivekananda speaks of the ideal of spiritual life thus in his inimitable language : “Each soul is potentially Divine. The goal is to manifest this Divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship or psychic control, or philosophy, by one or more, or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrine, or dogmas, or rituals, or books or temples or forms are but secondary details.”

## SWETASWATARA UPANISHAD

*By Swami Thyagisananda*

युक्तेन मनसा वयं देवस्य सवितुः सवे । सुवर्गेयाय शक्त्या ॥

देवस्य=Self-luminous सवितुः=of the Self सवे—for the birth युक्तेन=controlled मनसा=with the mind शक्त्या=vigorously सुवर्गेयाय=for the attainment of bliss (प्रयत्नाद्दे=shall endeavour).

With our minds controlled so as to bring out<sup>1</sup> the Self-luminous Soul, we shall vigorously endeavour for the attainment of Supreme Bliss<sup>2</sup>.

*Note.*—This verse speaks of the necessity for constant and vigorous practice or Abhyasa, which according to Patanjali forms along with Vairagya, the most necessary requisite for the complete cessation of the Chittavritti (modifications of the mind). Cf. Patanjali अभ्यासवैराग्याभ्यां तन्निरोधः Their control is by practice and non-attachment (Ch. 1, Sutra 12) ; तत्रस्थितौ यत्नोऽभ्यासः Continuous struggle to keep them (the Vrittis) perfectly restrained, is practice (Sutra 13) ; and स तु दीर्घकालं नैरन्तर्यं सत्कारासेवितो दृढभूमिः Practice becomes firmly grounded when observed for a long time with constant and intense zeal (Sutra 14). More pointedly the verse may be taken to refer to Dharana, the

sixth among the eight steps of Ashtangayoga as elaborated by Patanjali. Cf. Patanjali Sutra II, 1 देशबन्धितस्य धारणा Dharana is holding the mind on or confining its activities within a limit. This is the step immediately preceding Dhyana or meditation.

1. *To bring out*—This means to manifest the self-luminous soul immanent in every being and working from inside to remove the obstacles to its manifestation.

2. *For the attainments of Supreme Bliss*—The word Swarga here refers to the Paramatman according to Sankara.

युक्त्वाय मनसा देवान् सुवर्यतो धिया दिवम् ।

बृहज्ज्योतिः करिष्यतः सविता प्रसुवाति तान् ॥

सुवर्यतः=heaven-aspiring देवान्=the senses मनसा=with the help of the mind धिया=with the help of the intellect च=and युक्त्वाय=controlling दिवम्=Self-luminous बृहत्=Infinite ज्योतिः=Light करिष्यतः=manifesting तान्=them सविता=the Immanent Soul or God प्रसुवाति=regenerates.

Controlling the heaven-aspiring<sup>1</sup> senses with the help of the mind and the intellect<sup>2</sup>, the Immanent Soul so regenerates them as to enable them to manifest the Self-luminous<sup>3</sup> Infinite Light (3).

*Note.*—The verse refers to the necessity for Shama and Dama as well as for Pratyahara and Dharana.

1. *Heaven-aspiring*—The reference here is to the natural tendency of the senses to run after external worldly pleasures. According to Sankarananda Swarga or heaven is only the pleasure arising out of the enjoyment of external objects through attachment. It is to be noted on the other hand that the bliss of Atman realisation is quite different from pleasures of this type.

2. *With the help of the mind and intellect*—Cf. the allegorical description in the Katha Upanishad where the individual soul is the rider of the chariot viz., the body, bound for Vishnu's abode, Buddhi the charioteer and Manas the reins to curb the senses which form the steeds.

In other words, senses are by nature attracted to their objects. No external method is ultimately of any avail in checking their natural propensities. The mind and the Buddhi which control the senses have to be purified and transformed by a changed outlook on life. Then alone can sense-control be successfully practised.

युञ्जते मनः उत युञ्जते धियो विप्रा विप्रस्य बृहतो विपश्चितः ।

विहोत्रा दधे वयुनाविदेकइन्मही देवस्य सवितुः परिष्ठुतिः ॥

विप्राः=Wise men मनः=the mind युञ्जते=control धियः=the activities of the intellect or Buddhi युञ्जते=control उत=and वयुनाविद्=the knowing one एकः=single इत्=alone होत्राः=spiritual practices विदधे=undergoes विप्रस्य=all-pervading बृहतः=infinite विपश्चितः=all-knowing देवस्य=self-luminous सवितुः=of the immanent soul मही=great परिष्ठुतिः=glory.

Great is the glory of the Immanent Soul which is all-pervading, all-knowing, infinite and self-luminous. Only that single one<sup>1</sup> who knows<sup>2</sup>, undergoes the necessary discipline and spiritual practices. The wise do indeed control the activities of the intellect and practice meditation and concentration. (4)

*Note.*—This verse refers to Dhyana and Nididhyasana as necessary steps in the practice of Sadhana, subsequent to the arising of Sraddha in the mind of the aspirant as a result of Sravana and Manana.

1. *The single one*—This shows how only very few alone attempt to practise meditation. See also Gita Chap. VII, 3.

2. *Who knows*—Who is convinced that a higher kind of bliss is attainable through concentration and meditation than through giving free rein to the senses. This conviction arises out of study of the Scripture and advice of the Guru, *i.e.*, Sravana, as well as through Manana or reflection. It is this constant Sravana and Manana that create the working faith or Sraddha in the mind of the aspirant.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### **The Thiyas get restive**

Quite a sensation has been created of late by the proposed abandonment of Hinduism by the Thiyas, an important section of the so-called untouchable castes of Kerala (Malabar, Cochin and Travancore). The alleged reason for this movement is the social difficulties they are subjected to in the Hindu fold. It is said that they have not yet decided which religion they are to embrace after renouncing Hinduism. Christianity, Sikhism and Islam are the three faiths bidding for the allegiance of the Thiyas, and according to press reports the leanings of many of their leaders are towards Islam. We hear also that many Muslim missionaries from the Punjab, including the redoubtable Mr. Gauba, had been to the West Coast, preaching the glories of Islam to the prospective converts and painting a glowing picture of the transforming influence it will have on the social and spiritual status of the new con-

verts. We wish these missionaries had exerted a little at least of this transforming influence on their old converts for generations, so that other religionists might follow their own religious rites and ceremonies without being disturbed by these uplifted and educated followers of Islam.

The Thiyas of course have the full liberty to give up Hinduism if they are dissatisfied with it, and embrace any other faith that is likely to elevate them. But we, for our part, have a word to say about their alleged reason for their proposed conversion and the religion that is tempting them with promises of social redemption. It is true that the Thiyas are an untouchable caste according to orthodox classification. But they no longer form a Depressed Class. Economically they are in no way worse than the caste Hindus; physically they are much more manly and virile than they; and educationally they are not much inferior to them. The commu-

nity has produced at least one judge of the Madras High Court, and several other highly placed Government officers, lawyers, doctors, and other professional men. There are also quite a good number of Sanskrit scholars among them. More than all this, from the Thiya community came the late Sri Narayana Guru, who is perhaps the only man of originality and high spiritual attainment that Kerala produced in the past two centuries ; and among his disciples are to be counted not only Thiyas but many high caste Hindus as well. Thanks to this great man the Thiyas have got many temples, Maths, Sannyasins and educational institutions of their own. Now we ask—if remaining Hindus they could, by their own efforts, achieve all this in the past fifty years, what reason have they to abandon that religion on the ground of social disabilities. Perhaps the only disability they have in mind is the perversity of the Sanatanists and the die-hard caste Hindus in stigmatising them as untouchables and on this ground refusing them entry into the Hindu temples of which they happen to be the custodians at present. Now, from a strong and self-respecting community like the Thiyas, one would have expected quite a different type of reaction to this arrogant attitude of Hindu fundamentalists. If they considered temple-entry a vital question, they could have fought for it until the caste Hindus yielded, or they could have in turn treated caste-arrogant people as untouchables and boycotted the temples and repudiated their sanctity on the ground that holiness can never be associated with a place where the children of God are wantonly insulted and humiliated.

To us therefore the Thiya leaders seem to be moved more by a petulant and revengeful spirit than by any real feeling of social disabilities. This suspicion is strengthened when one hears of their sudden love for Islam ; for we feel in a saner moment the Thiyas would have selected some other religion than Islam, even if they wanted to give up Hinduism. We have seen Islam in a way benefiting people who belong to the most oppressed and down-trodden sections of society. It creates in them more of self-respect, infuses more of animal spirit into them, endows them with a better sense of organisation, and makes them capable not only of dealing blow for blow but even kicks where neither blow nor kick has been given. The Thiyas, however, are sufficiently strong and self-reliant, and require the services of no religion to make them so. What is more, they belong to a cultural strata that is much more advanced than the generality of Muslims in Kerala, and are therefore more likely to be culturally degraded than elevated by the proposed conversion. Perhaps the only so-called cultural advantage which conversion to Islam is likely to give them is that they will be required not only to renounce their faith but also much of their indigenous culture and adopt that of Arabia and Persia in its place. A Muslim missionary who visited Kerala recently sought to allay the fears of Thiyas in this respect by declaring that the only implication of conversion to Islam will be the acceptance of the unity of God and the prophethood of Mohammed. But we for our part know that to be an Indian Muslim means much more than that. If it does not make the shutting up of women behind the *Purdah* compulsory,

it at least insists on one's accepting the "Communal Rewards," namely, separate electorates and weightage of representation in legislatures. And as far as our experience of Muslim converts in India goes,—and it must be remembered 90 per cent of Indian Muslims are local converts—, the process of conversion which begins with the acceptance of the formula referred to before is however complete only after the convert accepts Urdu as his spoken language in place of his previous mother-tongue ; Arabic and Persian as his classical languages instead of Sanskrit ; becomes a victim to the illusory belief that he is a blue-blooded Arab ; comes to feel a greater kinship between himself and an Afghan foreigner or a Pathan hill man than with his Hindu neighbour, as was alleged to have been declared to be the case with himself by one who is both a prominent Muslim leader and a responsible Government officer ; and finally begins to consider himself a part of an army of occupation on whose sufferance the rest of India's population is living in this country. The Thiyas ought to consider all these implications seriously before they allow themselves to be carried away by the glib talks of propagandists.

### **The Depressed Classes of Muslim India**

There is, however, a still more important consideration which we have reserved for the last. According to the most liberal computation of the Census Report of 1931 the Depressed Classes among the Hindus number 239,195,140, i.e., 21 per cent of the total Hindu population of that year. Of these about half may constitute the untouchable castes, and therefore

the really oppressed classes ; the rest may only be called backward classes from the point of view of their educational and economic conditions. As against this, Indian Islam has got a population of Depressed Classes, which numbers more than half the total strength of the community. That is the *Muslim women* who, shut up behind the *Purdah*, are denied the two elementary rights of human beings—pure air and life-giving sunlight, of which God has placed an abundance at the disposal of man. It has also to be remembered that whereas powerful movements are at present working for the emancipation of Hindu Depressed Classes, the liberation of the Muslim Depressed Classes has scarcely begun, and when it is started one may be sure that the Mullas and the purists of Islam will oppose the movement with a violence, vehemence and fanaticism that the Hindu Sanatanists are incapable of.

We need not enter here into controversial topics like the alleged denial of soul in women by Islam and the low conception of womanhood it is supposed to foster. These may have no sanction in the Koran as enlightened Muslims contend, and are most likely the fabrications of degenerate Islamic theologians, popularised widely by interested propagandists. But then we must add that this is precisely the contention of liberal Hindus too with regard to untouchability ; for they maintain that untouchability has no place in genuine Hinduism. What, however, matters in religion is not the truths contained in books but the way in which they find expression in the lives of individuals and communities. Judged by this standard it will be seen that just as modern Hinduism is guilty of the practice of un-



touchability in spite of all its theoretical teachings with regard to the oneness of existence, modern Islam too, whatever might be the Koranic ideal of womanhood, is guilty in practice of instilling a very low conception of women among the vast majority of its followers. Just as the conservative Hindu masses believe that the untouchable castes are born impure and exist only to work as their serfs, so too the ordinary Muslim in the fields and the streets holds that women exist only for the pleasure of men. That this is not merely our surmise, but the actual state of affairs is amply proved by the wide prevalence of polygamy and loose forms of sex-relationship among Muslims, and above all by the numerous cases of outrages and abominable crimes perpetrated by Muslims against women, especially Hindu women inhabiting predominantly Muslim areas. Such attacks on women have been notoriously prevalent for long time past, but due to various delicate considerations involved in the matter and the disinclination of the conservative Hindus to take back the victims of such attacks into their families, very few of these cases used to be brought before the Police till recently. But thanks to the vigilance of certain associations, an appreciable number of such cases are being brought to light now-a-days. These numbers are so appallingly high that some of the Provincial Governments have felt the need of special measures to cope with the situation. Hence a Bill was recently passed in the Bengal Legislature, introducing flogging as a punishment for crimes against women, and strange to say, a Muslim member opposed the measure on the ground that it was directed against the Mus-

lim community, although the Bill had no such discriminative character in letter and in spirit. What inference are we to draw from this fact about the attitude of many Muslims, including some educated men like the above-mentioned member of the Bengal Legislature, towards women? At least the Thiyas, in place of being misguided by the ready promises and glowing pictures of Muslim missionaries, should ponder over these problems well. They will then find that theoretical liberality and practical hypocrisy are not the privileges of every-day Hinduism alone but a common feature of popular Islam as well, and that a change of faith may in all probability be a change for the worse and not for the better.

The hostility of the Thiyas to Hinduism is perhaps at its bitterest in regard to the right of temple entry which the Sanatanists of Hinduism are arrogantly denying them. It is a just grievance, especially for a progressive and self-respecting community like the Thiyas. But then, is the position of the Depressed Classes of Islam in any way better in this respect? In other words are the Muslim women allowed to pray in mosques either side by side with men or separately by themselves? We do not know what the Koran says on the point, or how the progressive Muslims view the question. But if our opinion is to be guided by practice, as it ought to be in matters of this type, then the unhesitating conclusion that an impartial observer will arrive at is that Islam denies the right of worship in its public mosques to *half of its population* as against Hinduism which does so only with regard to about a *tenth of its population*. And whereas in Hinduism there is at present an

active movement to put an end to this state of affairs, we doubt whether the Muslim leaders have even raised this question relating to this elementary religious right of women. We would therefore ask the Thiya leaders who have suddenly fallen in love with Islam whether they would like to become an Elevated Class by condemning their womenfolk to become a Depressed Class, and again whether they find any greater charm in Islam with about 50 per cent of Depressed Classes, than in Hinduism with only 21 per cent of such classes? If the Thiya leaders would dispassionately consider these points raised by us, they will feel convinced that on the whole conversion to Islam is not in any way going to place them in a better social environment. When all aspects of the question are considered without anger and prejudice, they will find in Hinduism a much better source of help and inspiration in the

promotion of both their spiritual and secular ends.

We must in conclusion add that nothing of what we have stated above should be construed as showing disrespect to the genuine spiritual content of Islam. Islam as a spiritual gospel we value as much as any other religion, and the Koran and the Holy Prophet command our reverence. We only want to counteract the propaganda of unscrupulous men who compare the worst features of a religious community with the best of another, with the deliberate purpose of misleading men and serving their own ulterior motives. Let the preaching of religion be the concern of men who have a glimpse of the Divine Light within; let not electioneering politicians and riot-fostering communalists stalk the land in its name and prey upon the ignorance and impulsiveness of people.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE SECRET LORE OF INDIA AND THE ONE PERFECT LIFE FOR ALL (with a Supplement): *By W. M. Teape. Published by W. Heffer & Sons, Ltd., Cambridge, England. (Copies can be had of S. S. Book Emporium, Basavangudi, Bangalore City.) Price 1/4sh. 6d.*

This book is the result of a life-long study of the foundations of Eastern and Western religious thought. The author wants to give a parallel presentation of the main teachings of Hinduism and Christianity and consider their relation to each other. It is however doubtful if Mr. Teape with his evangelistic outlook is fit for a task that demands an unprejudiced mind, breadth of vision and a single-hearted devotion to Truth. For he mentions early in the volume that Hinduism is the great rival that Christianity has to face and conquer, and that his study of the Upanishads was undertaken just to understand the opposing forces from within.

Such is the genesis of the present study. The book consists of three parts. In the first, which is introductory, the author traces the course of Hindu religious thoughts and tradition from the earliest times to the days of the Upanishads. The second part consists of free rendering into English of select portions of ten Upanishads which, according to the author's view, embody the secret lore. This section is provided with profuse notes and a vocabulary of important Sanskrit terms. The third part gives the author's 'conclusion' which we find is nothing but a reiteration of the original hypothesis with which he started, *viz.*, that Christianity alone provides the perfect faith for all mankind and that all other faiths are defective. His opinion about the ancient Hindu seers is that "the Upanishad Fathers are like prospectors who have caught sight in outline and with not a little mist obscuring their view, what has

been revealed in such fulness and clearness to the Christian." He adds with great condescension, "Important as it is for India, ourselves and the world that India should have its due place as a civic entity in the comity of nations, but how much more important for India, ourselves and the world that India have its due place as a spiritual member of the Church of God."

The spirit embodied in the above words condemns the book more strongly than any criticism of ours can do. For it is quite the reverse of religion to hold that God or Truth is the monopoly of any one sect or church and that there is no hope of salvation for those who follow their own personal faiths. We are, therefore, more inclined to pity the author for his blinding obsession than quarrel with him over the wrong conclusion. The sense of pity is only deepened by the evidence in the book of the author's patient labour and industry in trying to master Sanskrit and understand the secret lore of the Upanishads. The author has taken great pains in the third part to give a parallel presentation of the main doctrines of the Upanishads and the Bible, pointing out the similarities between them on the one hand and their striking resemblance to the ideas of modern poets like Walt Whitman on the other. He has also drawn attention to the confirmation which ancient Hindu philosophical doctrines have received at the hands of modern scientists and philosophers like Sir James Jeans and General Smuts. In spite of these interesting features, which invest the book with some value to students of comparative religion, the author's evangelical obsession has vitiated the work and made it a misleading guide for workers in the field. Mr. Teape's strange charge against the sages of the Upanishads is that they suffer from the miasma of sin!

**ANTHOLOGY OF VEDIC HYMNS.** By *Bhuvananda Sarasvati*. *The Ram Lal Kapur Trust, Anarkali, Lahore, India. Pages 326. Price Rs. 1-8, cloth-bound Rs. 1-12 only.*

The book contains some of the best hymns of the four Vedas—hymns whose high value has been acknowledged by most Vedic scholars. Some of the important topics of the hymns are "Worship of the One God," "Prayers for Noble Intentions," "The Nature of the Supreme Being and means to attain Him," "Man's Endeavour

after Perfection," "The Soul of the Universe and his Universal Body"—all topics of universal need and acceptance. Each stanza is followed by the Padapatha, Anvaya which is a sort of paraphrase in Sanskrit, notes on each word, English translation of the stanza, purport and comment.

The word-notes are the most important portions of the work, their importance lying in the fact that they are presented entirely from the Indian point of view with the help of Vedic Grammar, Nirukta and the Brahmanas. When western scholars deal with the words they pay more attention to the roots than to the suffixes and translate texts from the point of view of comparative philology. Our present author, however, has gone to the other extreme of rejecting comparative philology altogether, which is a great defect of the book. Bhuvanandaji has applied the rules of grammar with a vengeance, perhaps to make up the defects in the other direction.

His "translation" is not literal, which he himself informs us. It is a compromise between translation and paraphrase, sometimes rising to the rank of explanation. The author is a great admirer of Sri Dayananda Sarasvati, whose views he shares and presents, and consequently rises or falls with him. The attempt at divesting the Vedas of all mythological and historical settings and presenting a pure undiluted spiritual view of each verse, we are afraid, is sure to meet with failure. Sayana might not be always right, but to reject his explanation merely because it is mythological is to refuse to pay Caesar what is his due.

The worst part of the book, however, is the "Comments." What with unduly long quotations from the *Smritis* and *Smritis* and from the writings of English poets and poetasters, and what with the presentation of queer, antediluvian explanations (e.g., the so-called *mathematical* explanation of *Aum*) and long uncalled-for digressions, the "Comments" are a dead weight to the whole book. There are a good many evidences of scholarship in the book, some dark passages have been beautifully illuminated, many of the exegetical notes are brilliant; but the lack of a sense of proportion and some queer views ill-suited to modern tastes have partly taken away its worth.

Introduction of comparative philology into the otherwise brilliant "notes" and a substantial cutting out of the "comments" will greatly enhance the value of the book.

**RAMAKRISHNA THE MAN AND THE POWER:**  
*By Swami Gnaneshwarananda. The Vedanta Society, 120, East Delaware Place, Chicago, Ill., U.S.A. Page 125.*

It is on the occasion of the Ramakrishna Centenary that the Swami has brought out this beautifully got up and profusely illustrated little book to acquaint the larger public of U.S.A. with the life and mission of Sri Ramakrishna. In the course of two dissertations, which the book embodies, a very graphic and faithful picture has been drawn which brings out into relief the real man and what he stood for, *viz.*, that man is not a geographically bound creature but an essentially spiritual being, bearing in his very nature the burden of entire humanity. The modern world stands in need of such a life and such a message, and the Swami has done well in presenting the book to it at a time when man's body and intellect are being scientifically trained to play the part of ravenous wolves. When Europe and some parts of Asia are trying to convert their womanfolk into "man manufacturing machines" for a future war, it is profitable to learn how Sri Ramakrishna worshipped one of their representatives as divinity incarnate. When the very booms of commercialism have brought about the present slump, from whose grip there seems to be no escape, it is wise to learn the saints'

evaluation of money and to brood over it if the spirit of man can be saved that way.

**VEDANTADINDIMA (Sanskrit) :** *By Nrsimha Sarasvati with the Commentary Bhavabodhini. Published by the Adhyatmaprakash Office, 65, II Road Chamrajpet, Bangalore City.*

The book under review belongs to the class known as Prakaranas in Sanskrit Philosophical literature, and forms a valuable introduction to the study of Advaita Vedanta. Our knowledge of its author is next to nothing. A perusal of the book would easily reveal the fact that he must have been an adept, for he covers within 94 Anushtubha verses of crystal clarity all the salient features of Advaita Vedanta with true effect. The last quarter of each couplet, forming an anaphora, reminds one of the repeated beat of a drum proclaiming the message of Advaita. Though not entirely unknown to scholars hitherto, the work has been suffering from want of a decent and correct edition. Mr. Subramanya Sarma has supplied this want and has besides done a service to students of Indian Philosophy by publishing along with it a lucid and non-technical commentary of his own on the work. At the close of his comment on each verse the learned author has traced the Upanishadic texts that may have given rise to the lofty Advaitic ideas that are garnered in these couplets. Mr. Sarma's emendations of the faulty texts is commendable. The book is rounded off by an alphabetical contents and an index to the first words of the Slokas.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### The Sri Ramakrishna Centenary in New York

A correspondent from New York writes :—The Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna has been used by Swami Nikhilananda as an opportunity to bring knowledge of this great Soul to the attention of a larger public, through an interesting program of events and a series of articles contributed to magazines and leading newspapers of this city. The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center began its celebration in the Chapel, on the evening of February 21st, with a lecture by Swami Vividishananda of Washington,

D.C., on Sri Ramakrishna, illustrated by beautiful lantern slides.

The next evening, February 22nd, two hundred friends and members of the Center participated in the Centenary dinner given in the large private dining room of a well-known restaurant near the Chapel. For the first time five Swamis of the Eastern Coast joined in one great function, to speak on the message of Sri Ramakrishna. It was most inspiring for the many guests to hear the Swamis Paramananda of Boston, Gnaneshwarananda of Chicago, Akhilananda of Providence, Vividishananda of Washing-

ton, and their own beloved Swami Nikhila-nanda, each in his own sincere and characteristic way tell of the Master, in whose service they had come far from their mother-country to bestow His blessings far and wide. Mr. Salvatore de Madariaga, former ambassador of Spain to France and the U.S.A., and former chairman of the Disarmament Committee of the League of Nations, paid a beautiful tribute to the spiritual flowering of India, saying that he hoped it would soon be grafted on the tree of Western material progress. Many prominent New Yorkers attended the dinner, which received cordial notice from the press.

A week later, on Sunday March 1st, the special Sri Ramakrishna Birthday Celebration was held at the Chapel, an unforgettable event for the crowds that attended it. Many eager souls stood out in the hallway to hear the beautiful service by Swami Nikhilananda, who spoke on the "Religious Experiences of a Great Master."

As the culmination of the Sri Ramakrishna Centennial, through the unstinted efforts of Swami Nikhilananda, a public meeting attended by twelve hundred people was held at the Town Hall of New York, on the evening of March 8. Five eminent speakers representing various phases of public life, besides the Swami, were on the platform to pay their tribute to Sri Ramakrishna. The large portrait from the Chapel, surrounded by beautiful floral decorations, stood on an easel facing the audience. The meeting opened with an organ prelude, a Sanskrit invocation, and the introductory address on Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings by Swami Nikhilananda, which was later distributed in pamphlet form to the many deeply interested members of the audience. After the fine and compelling discourses of the revered Swami, and his reading of messages from His Holiness Swami Akhandananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Romain Rolland and Dr. John Haynes Holmes, Dr. Frederick Robinson, President of the College of the City of New York, spoke in appreciation of both western science and eastern mysticism, showing how both are necessary for the fulfilment of life. Dr. Samuel I. Goldenson, rabbi of the largest Jewish congregation in New York, next spoke on the priceless example of spiritual joy given by Sri Ramakrishna to the world,

as it had been given by prophets and sages of former times, in direct opposition to the modern scramble for sense pleasure, wealth and property. He in turn was followed by Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, who read a scholarly paper on the contributions of the various great religions of the world and of their fundamental harmony. Following Dr. Coomaraswamy, the Reverend Wendell Phillips, rector of the Episcopal Church of New Rochelle, spoke with great feeling about the need of turning to India for a better understanding of Christ, especially to Sri Ramakrishna who so recently manifested that spiritual power, almost forgotten to-day, which is so closely related to the power of Christ. The last speaker, Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukherji, noted Hindu author and lecturer, told some interesting stories of the Master's life. Every one was profoundly moved by the great personality of Sri Ramakrishna, who could unite the thoughts and aspirations of nations and of thinkers on opposite sides of the globe, and who promises to bring a measure of peace and understanding to struggling humanity. This meeting has had a great deal of newspaper publicity which will surely benefit those who have not yet heard the message of the Master.

Swami Nikhilananda has also participated in the Centenary festivals of Boston, Providence, Washington, D.C. and Chicago.

#### **The Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Celebration in Burma**

The Centenary celebrations in Burma commenced on Friday the 27th March 1936 with the opening of the Ramakrishna Centenary Exhibition of Arts and Crafts by Mr. M. M. Rafi, Mayor of Rangoon, at the Ladies' Park, East Rangoon. There was a very large gathering present at the opening function. The Mayor in a neat speech paid a glowing tribute to the Saint of Dakshineswar, and exhorted the citizens of Rangoon, to support the Exhibition by patronising it in large numbers. To enable all classes of people, rich and poor, to attend it, the admission fee was fixed at annas two. In addition to the religious and artistic side of the Exhibition, the organisers arranged a number of interesting side shows, like snake charming, Kirtan and Magic, which all proved very

attractive and popular. The support of the public was uniformly encouraging and about a lakh of people visited the Exhibition. Therefore the Exhibition was extended till the 7th of April. The stall-holders were granted certificates and medals which were appreciated.

The musical gathering for juniors and adults were held on the 6th and 14th respectively. On the first day 21 youngsters took part and on the second 20 artists. To encourage the acquirement of physical strength and stamina an Athletic competition was held among school boys. The competition included efficiency tests and boxing, and boys from half a dozen schools took part. Silver cups, trophies and medals were presented to the successful competitors. Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar, and Swami Sharvananda were present at the meeting. Prof. B. K. Sarkar presided over the function and distributed the prizes. He made an eloquent speech and felt glad that an Athletic competition was held under Sri Ramakrishna Centenary auspices.

On Sunday the 5th April a mass procession was organised as part of the celebrations, and the procession with section devoted to various faiths and including Burmans, Indians, Chinese, Buddhists, Mohamedans, Hindus and Christians went round the town through the principal thoroughfares. Symbols and placards, images and photos, of religious teachers and faiths were prominently displayed. More than 10,000 persons joined the procession, which proved to be the most successful and the most effective means of bringing the message of the unity of the religions to the door of the man in the street.

The Religious Convention, which was the central feature of the celebrations started on 8th April and lasted for three days. It was presided over by Prof. B. K. Sarkar of Calcutta University. Lectures were delivered by prominent and well-known authorities on Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Zoroastrianism. On the 10th April Prof. Sarkar delivered his presidential address. Speeches were made on various religious movements like Brahmoism, Arya Samaj, Sikhism, Taoism, Sufism and Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement. Swami Sharvananda presided over the meetings on the

11th, 12th and 13th April, and spoke on Hinduism, and Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement. Swami Sharvananda also delivered other public lectures on subjects connected with the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary.

The celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna Centenary in districts were attended by Swami Sharvananda, who visited Pegu, Toungoo, Mandalay, and Maymyo, accompanied by Swami Punyananda, Monk-in-charge of the Ramakrishna Hospital in Rangoon. They started from Rangoon on the 14th and returned on the 19th April. The celebrations in districts were enthusiastic and satisfactory.

On 19th April Swami Sharvananda delivered an inspiring address on the "Message of Sri Ramakrishna to the Modern World" at the Reddiar Hall, East Rangoon. The meeting was presided over by Mr. Anklesaria, a prominent Theosophist. The celebrations came to a close with another lecture by the Swami on the "Significance of the Religious Experiences of Sri Ramakrishna," when a large gathering was present.

#### **Vedanta Society, Providence, Rhode Island**

Swami Akhilananda with his friends, Annapurna, Bhakti and Frances, returned from India on December 23, 1934 landing in New York. The following day the Swami spoke on the Incarnation of Christ and next Sunday on the Message of Christ, and thereafter resumed the regular activities of the season.

Services were conducted every Sunday, and classes on Tuesdays and Fridays. Tuesday classes are devoted to Scriptural studies and often to series of lectures on different phases of Practical Psychology. These last are found very constructive and helpful as many pseudo-psychologists have created much confusion in American minds. Friday classes are devoted to the practice of meditation followed by study of the Scriptures.

This year Swami was invited by many prominent clubs and churches in the city and in the State to speak on India as well as on different phases of Hinduism. The Swami regularly attended the meetings and discussions of the Universal Club of Brown University, Union Ministers

meetings, and the sittings of the Williams-town Institute of Human Relations.

The Swami's lectures over the radio, WPRO, were so much appreciated that he is still asked to continue them every week which he has been doing through this year. At intervals of one and a half to two months he also conducts the morning service over station WJAR, where he alternates with ministers.

While the Swami was absent in India, friends carried on the work here by reading on the usual lecture evenings. After the Swami's return several important birthdays were celebrated. Of these Sri Ramakrishna's birthday was a big celebration. Swami Akhilananda spoke after the dinner, as also Reverend Wilmot, Dr. Claxton and others. Good Friday and Easter were also appropriately celebrated. The season closed with a week of festivities on the arrival of Swami Gnaneshwarananda of Chicago and of Swami Vividishananda. There was a big dinner with Swami Paramananda and his friends from Boston. On successive nights the Swamis lectured, and Swami Gnaneshwarananda showed his moving pictures of India which were much appreciated.

#### Ramakrishna Mission, Ceylon Branch

The Report of the Ramakrishna Mission, Ceylon Branch, for the year ending June, 1935 is a record of all-round progress in the spiritual and educational activities of the mission in the Island. The Ashram at Colombo has proved itself to be a very valuable centre for the dissemination of religious ideas through its library, book stall and the several classes and lectures by both the resident and the visiting Swamis. The work of erecting a permanent building for the Ashram has been taken up—a piece of land, a quarter of an acre in extent, has been secured, the foundation stone of the building laid and a sum of Rs. 4,793 collected towards the building fund.

The Mission manages 12 schools and an orphanage in the Island. The total number of pupils attending the schools is 2,285 (1,537 boys and 748 girls), and that of teachers 74. The orphanage at Batticaloa, known as the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, provides food, clothing, lodging and education for 42 orphan children.

Although it is not included in the report we may also mention here an important event that took place early in 1936 on the occasion of the celebration of Swami Vivekananda's 77th birthday. This is the opening of "Jerbai Memorial Hall" which is a gift to the Mission by Mr. D. H. Markar in memory of his wife. The opening function was done by Mr. W. L. Murphy, the Mayor of Colombo. He commended the mission's ideal of 'Renunciation and Service' and appreciated its educational activities in the island. It is also happy to note that the Ashram building has been completed and opened on 24th February, 1936.

#### FAMINE & FLOOD

##### Ramakrishna Mission's Appeal

Srimat Swami Virajananda, the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission has issued the following appeal :—

*Khulna Famine* : The public is aware that Bengal is being ravaged by a terrible famine. Even on a modest computation, half a million people are practically going without food. To add to their misery, there is a dire scarcity of water.

From all quarters we are receiving heart-rending appeals for help. Although the funds at our disposal are extremely meagre, we have decided to start relief work at least in one district. We have chosen Khulna as our centre for relief work, and a contingent of workers has already been despatched to the Satkhira Sub-division of this district.

*Arakan Flood* : Readers of newspapers are also aware that a terrible flood has devastated extensive areas on the Arakan Coast, causing considerable damage to life and property. The reports that have so far appeared in the press give too little indication of the extent of damage done. Considering immediate help necessary, the Ramakrishna Mission, in co-operation with its Rangoon branch, has sent a batch of workers to Akyab for organising relief.

We earnestly appeal to all to contribute promptly to our relief fund. Contributions, however, small, will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged by the President, Ramakrishna Mission, P. O. Belur Math, Dist. Howrah, (Bengal).



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

बहुश्रुतं तपस्त्यागः श्रद्धा यज्ञक्रिया क्षमा  
भावशुद्धिर्दया सत्यं संयमश्चात्मसंपदः ।  
एतदेवाभिपद्यस्व मा ते भूच्चलितं मनः  
एतन्मूलौ हि धर्मर्यावितदेकपदं हितम् ।  
धर्मेणैवर्षयस्तीर्णा धर्मेणैवलोकाः प्रतिष्ठिताः  
धर्मेण देवा दिवि च धर्मे चार्थः समाहितः ।  
धर्मो राजन् गुणः श्रेष्ठो मध्यमो ह्यर्थ उच्यते  
कामो यवीयानिति च प्रवदन्ति मनीषिणः ।  
तस्माद्धर्मप्रधानेन भवितव्यं यतात्मना  
तथा च सर्वभूतेषु वर्तितव्यं यतात्मना ।

The wealth of the soul consists in abundance of learning, concentration, renouncing for a noble purpose, faith, activities for worship or sacrifice, forbearance, purity of conscience, compassion, veracity and self-control. Strive to secure these; let not your mind get unsteady. Righteousness and prosperity are based upon these. They constitute the entire good. Through righteousness alone sages have found their purpose; the universe is rooted in righteousness; the gods shine in the heaven through righteousness, and prosperity is poised in righteousness. Righteousness, O King, is the highest virtue; wealth takes its rank only in the middle while desire for pleasure is the last: this is the verdict of intelligent thinkers. Therefore a man of trained instincts and mind should consider righteousness as the most important duty of life. His behaviour towards all too should be tempered by righteousness.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Ch. 165-verses 5—9.



# SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MASTER AS THE TEACHER OF HIS OWN GURUS

*By Swami Saradananda*

[In the following sections we get an account of the Master's teacher, Bhairavi Brahmani, and a discussion on the place of supernatural powers in spiritual life.]

I reside in the hearts of all beings. From Me come memory and knowledge, and their obliteration too. I am the Principle to be known through all the Vedas. I am the Revealer of the Vedas and the Knower of them also.

Gita XV, 15.

*Spiritual leadership is the birth-right of the incarnations of God*

**W**E have already stated that a born leader shows his inborn aptitude for leadership from his very early days. This is particularly the case with one who is a great incarnation of God. He realises even from childhood the ideal he is born to embody and illustrate before the world. Growth of the body and the senses, convenient time, place and favourable circumstances in other respects may act as conditions helping the fullest perfection of that ideal in him but none of these external factors really implant the ideal in him and thereby make him the Guru of men. It is found, on the other hand, to be an inborn gift with which he sets out in his life's journey. Hence all attempts to trace the realisation of this ideal to some particular cause in his life meets with total failure. Exactly similar is the experience that faces us when we try to investigate the origin of the attitude of the Guru in the Master's life. The investigator will be astonished to discover the manifestation of this attitude in all the stages of his life—whether it be his childhood, his youth or the period of his spiritual practices, and he will

arrive at no conclusion as to how it appeared in him for the first time. We do not like to increase the bulk of the book by referring to the early life of the Master here. But much remains to be said as yet about the incidents revealing the teacher aspect of the Master's personality in his youth and the period of his spiritual practices, when he was in very close association with Mathuranath. We now propose to place these incidents before the reader.

*The Master received instructions from many Gurus*

The Master would often try to explain to us with the illustration of the story of Avadhuta in the Bhagavatam that although the Guru who initiates the disciple with *mantram* (the mystic formula) is one, he may have many helpers and teachers in the spiritual realm. The Bhagavatam states that the Avadhuta received special instructions from twenty-four Gurus one after another before attaining final realisation. In the Master's life too we find many similar instances of his resorting to different Gurus for receiving instruction in different kinds of spiritual practices that lead to the realisation of diverse phases of Truth. But among them we heard the

Master often refer only to three persons, viz., Bhairavi, the Brahmin lady; Tota Puri, the naked Vedantin; and Govinda, the Mahomedan Fakir. Although he had been instructed in the spiritual practices of other Hindu sects too by other teachers, he would hardly refer to them at all. At best he may sometimes make a general statement that he had been initiated into these cults by different Gurus and that a brief practice of three days gave him the highest realisation in each cult. It is difficult to ascertain now why the Master did not refer to them—whether it was because they had escaped from his memory or because they did not deserve special mention. But this at least is clear that the Master's connection with them was only for a brief period; and hence they were not perhaps worth mentioning individually.

#### *Bhairavi, the Brahmin lady*

Of all the teachers of the Master, Bhairavi, the Brahmin lady, spent a very long period in the company of the Master. But it is now difficult to ascertain exactly how long she stayed; because she had left Dakshineswar for good a little before we assembled at the feet of the Master. After her departure the Master received news about her only once. She was then spending her time in spiritual practices at Benares. Since then nothing is known about her.

#### *How Bhairavi helped the Master in his spiritual practices*

We have heard from the Master that the Bhairavi lived for a pretty long time in the Dakshineswar temple as well as at other places on the river bank close by the temple, such as, Deva Mandal's Ghat, etc. We are also told that she led the Master

through all the practices prescribed in the sixty-four principal Tantric treatises one after another. She was well-grounded in the Vaishnava scriptures too, and rendered occasional help to the Master when he was practising the attitude of the female friend of the Lord. And even after the expiry of the Master's period of spiritual practices she lived in great honour at Dakshineswar for about twelve years during which time she would sometimes visit Kamarpukur, the Master's birth-place, in his company or along with Hriday, his nephew, and stay there with the Master's family. From now the Holy Mother used to call her 'Mother' and respect her as her own mother-in-law.

#### *The Bhairavi's experience of the Vaishnava attitudes*

By following the Vaishnava cults the Bhairavi had to some extent a direct experience of friendly love (Sakhya Bhava) and parental affection (Vatsalya Bhava) towards God. While residing at the Deva Mandal's Ghat in Aria Daha, she would sometimes take a lump of butter in hand and call the Master aloud by the name 'Gopala' ('cow-boy,' a name of Krishna), and simultaneously feeling a strong desire to meet her, the Master would at once run to her, like a child hastening to its mother's arms, covering the intervening distance of two miles at a stretch. He would then sit by her side and eat the things offered by her. Besides this, she would occasionally borrow Benares silk cloths and ornaments from others, and wearing them would go to the Master at Dakshineswar along with other women of the locality, singing devotional songs on the way and

carrying various eatables to feed the Master with. On such occasions, with her dishevelled hair and exuberance of emotion, she would resemble Yasoda, the mother of Krishna, afflicted with the pangs of separation from her beloved Divine Child.

*Her personal beauty causes  
suspicion in Mathuranath*

In proportion to her inner virtues, the Bhairavi had extraordinary physical beauty too. We have heard from the Master that observing her beautiful appearance and hearing about her habit of freely wandering from place to place all alone without any one to protect her, Mathuranath at first felt suspicious about her character. He went so far as to remark sarcastically one day, "Well, Bhairavi, where is your 'Bhairava' (meaning 'husband')?" She was then coming out of the Kali temple after worshipping the holy image. Although accosted in this unbecoming manner, she was not in the least perplexed or annoyed. With perfect equanimity she at first looked steadily at Mathuranath and then pointed with her finger to the image of Shiva lying under the feet of the Divine Mother, in the pose of a corpse. Worldly-minded and sceptical as Mathuranath was, he would not let her go so easily. "But is not that Bhairava inert?" argued he still, whereupon came the reply in a deep voice, "Why have I become a Bhairavi then, if I cannot make Him instinct with movement?" Mathuranath, thus outwitted and put to shame by the composed attitude and the apt reply of the Bhairavi, was compelled to remain silent. In course of time, as he became more and more acquainted with the noble life and

the endless virtues of this lady, his initial suspicion gradually disappeared from his mind.

*Nothing is known about her ancestry*

We have heard from the Master that the Bhairavi was born somewhere in East Bengal, and that from her very look one would be convinced of her high birth. But nothing definite is known about her native village or family; nor is there any information as to whether she was ever married, why she took to the life of a wandering nun and where she acquired her vast learning and spiritual power.

*The Bhairavi was an aspirant  
of a very high order*

It is needless to mention that the Bhairavi was an aspirant of a very high order. This is amply proved by the fact of her being chosen by Providence as a teacher of the Master. Further the Master himself had narrated to us several facts relating to her high spiritual attainments. It seems even before her meeting him, the Bhairavi had come to know through her Yogic power that in her life-time she was to help three persons in their spiritual struggle, the Master being one of them. She could also recognise these persons at her very first meeting with them, although she happened to meet them at quite different places and times.

*The Bhairavi's vision*

When the Bhairavi met the Master for the first time, she spoke to him about her other two disciples, Chandra and Girija by name. "My child," said she, "I have met these two persons already, and have been so long searching for you. I shall introduce them to you some time

later." And actually she did bring these persons to Dakshineswar at a later date to meet the Master. We have heard from the Master that both of them were aspirants of great eminence. But although far advanced in the path of spirituality, they could not reach perfection by attaining God-realisation. They were about to stray from the spiritual path after acquiring certain miraculous powers.

*Chandra—one of the disciples of the Bhairavi*

Chandra, as the Master used to say, was of a devotional temperament and a true lover of God. He attained the power of making himself invisible to others. After putting on a certain amulet he could disappear from the sight of all people, and in that state could go freely to carefully guarded places which were otherwise inaccessible. But it has to be carefully borne in mind that such supernatural powers fill our little minds with pride and lure us into the meshes of desire, thereby barring our further progress towards the noble ideal and ultimately bringing about our spiritual downfall too. The waxing of egoism results in the increase of our vices, and the waning of it in the attainment of religious merits. To swell our ego is therefore to diminish our spiritual stature while the attenuation of it is tantamount to the enrichment of our spiritual being. Sin is only another name for selfishness, and piety for selflessness. All our troubles cease when the ego dies. The Master would try again and again to impress this truth indelibly on our minds. "It is this ego," he would say, "that has been described in the scriptures as the cord binding together the conscious and the un-

conscious. The conscious principle is the Atman of the nature of knowledge, and the unconscious principle is the combination of the body, mind, senses and the intellect. The ego has knit them together, and has thereby perpetuated in the human mind the illusion that he is a limited self possessing the body, senses, intellect and so on.

"Progress in spirituality is impossible unless this pernicious knot is cut asunder. Therefore, it must be given up. And the Divine Mother has shown me that the supernatural powers are the most abominable things in this world. One should never devote one's thoughts to them. Sometimes they appear spontaneously in the course of one's spiritual practices. But the aspirant who pays any heed to them, becomes stranded there and cannot proceed Godward any further."

*Supernatural powers make an aspirant stray from the right path*

Swami Vivekananda was essentially a man of meditation. At all times and in the midst of all forms of activity he would keep his mind partially indrawn and engaged in meditation upon God. As the Master used to say, he had reached perfection in meditation. One day in the course of meditation there suddenly appeared in him the powers of clairvoyance and clairaudience. Thenceforth whenever he would sit for meditation, a little concentration would bring his mind to a plane from where he could see persons at places beyond the range of vision and distinctly hear their voices too. Immediately after an experience of this kind he would

feel the desire to verify the truth of it. Accordingly he would stop meditation and go to the persons and places he had seen in the state of meditation. In every case he found his experience true, no part of it failing to correspond with facts. When this state continued for some days, the Swami informed the Master about it, whereupon came his immediate warning, "These are obstacles in the path of God-realisation. Do not meditate for some days."

*Chandra's downfall due to his supernatural power*

With the attainment of supernatural powers Chandra too became filled with pride. We have heard from the Master how the attachment to lust and gold increased in his mind ; how he fell in love with the daughter of a wealthy and highly respectable gentleman and began to frequent her place undetected with the help of his supernatural power ; and finally, how he lost that power too owing to the increase of egotism and was humiliated in various ways.

## AGGRESSIVE HINDUISM

[Some important aspects of the inter-religious situation in modern India are discussed in the following paragraphs.]

### Symptoms of Cultural Decadence

**I**F LIFE, as manifested in this world, is never at rest. It must either expand or degenerate. In accordance with this law we find that a culture, when it is in a vigorous condition, goes beyond its geographical limits and, fearless of absorbing ideas alien to it, impresses its stamp on the life of mankind in general. On the other hand when decadence sets in, a culture begins to shrink into itself, and seeks protection behind a wall of taboos, prohibitions and other forms of negative non-essentials. Losing confidence in its own strength and capacity to absorb foreign ideas without surrendering its own individuality, a culture in decadence develops a rigidity of form and conservatism of temperament which gradually reduce its intellectual aristocracy into tradition-bound bigots, and the masses into an amorphous conglomeration of humanity without

any cultural self-consciousness or the capacity to unite together for a common purpose under the guidance of a dominant idea.

This tendency is seen to a marked degree in religion, which forms one of the most important ingredients in the composition of a culture. In the wake of cultural decadence ideals degenerate into mere idols ; passivity is exalted above dynamism ; purity and holiness are confounded with ceremonialism ; the letter of the law gains precedence of its spirit ; and the God of the Universe is reduced into the God of castes and cliques. The impressive spiritual monuments of a great cultural past remain buried in the pages of old books, and receive no doubt the lip allegiance of the masses and the idolatrous worship of the classes, but they exercise little influence on the daily life of either.

Such seems to be the condition of Hinduism to-day, or at least it used to be so sometime back. In our last number we tried to place before our readers a detailed analysis of this situation, both in its spiritual and social aspects. Indian culture is said at present to be passing through a period of revival, and if this is so, this revival must also affect religion. In the following paragraphs we shall consider on what lines the reconstruction or rather the re-adjustment of Hinduism is to proceed.

### **Spiritual and Secular Aggressions Contrasted**

Swami Vivekananda described his conception of what a revived Hinduism ought to be by the significant expression "Aggressive Hinduism." In ordinary parlance the word aggressive has a bad odour about it in as far as it implies the use of violence and intrusion upon the rights of others. Especially when it is applied to religion, one at once recalls the accounts of inhuman persecutions and bloody religious wars. But it has to be remembered that aggression in the spiritual sense is quite different from aggression in the secular sense. For secular aggression necessarily means elbowing out others in competing for a limited amount of material goods, but aggression in the true spiritual sense has no such implication. The wealth of the spiritual realm is unlimited, and acquisition of any amount of it by one does not jeopardise the chances of others doing the same. Thus if one man becomes truthful, pure and godly, it does not in the least stand in the way of his neighbours also becoming so. On the other hand it will be of much help to them, as his example will be a source of strength

and inspiration in following the path of righteousness.

### **How Religions get contaminated**

It may, however, be asked why it is that the history of religions which ostensibly embody the spiritual aspirations of men presents such a spectacle of bloodshed, narrowness and bigotry. The answer is that this is due to the unspiritual nature of the agencies and institutions controlling religion, owing to their association with vested interests. These vested interests, when they gain control over religion, torture their pure spiritual content into rigid dogmas which they thrust upon the credulous masses either by holding out threats and rewards for the future or by compulsion exercised through the powers that be. Christ preached the love of God and charity to man, but the church placed itself on the throne of God and declared that unless men followed her dictates and saw things through her spectacles, they will have no salvation. She went further and declared that there can be nothing more meritorious than saving souls, whether the means adapted for that be good, bad or indifferent; and saving of course means essentially bringing men under her control. Under these circumstances Christ disappeared and the Church took his place with consequences that are well-known to all. So also the Prophet Muhammed preached the surrender of the self unto the Supreme Being, but historic Islam elevated the Koran to the place of the Supreme Being and demanded in its name, the surrender not so much of man's ego as of his judgment. The State and religion were jumbled into one, and correspondingly the missionary got amalgamated with the soldier. The re-

sult has been that the religion of self-surrender has degenerated into a religion of head-surrender.

### **The Two Dominant Ideas of Hinduism**

Aggressiveness in the sense described above has never been the motto of Hinduism at any time, but in its healthy days it was aggressive in quite another way. It is a remarkable fact that unlike the other great religions of the world, Hinduism did not emanate from any single founder ; it has no system of public worship, no definitely formulated and set creed and no central authority claiming to exercise or actually exercising control over the thought and conviction of all people who call themselves Hindus. For this reason it has been denied the status of a religion by many critics, but we for our part believe that it is a compliment rather than a reproach. Hinduism is not a dogmatic stereotyped creed holding out before humanity a set of clearly defined or finally revealed beliefs, giving man either the option of accepting them and being saved, or of rejecting them and being damned for eternity. It is on the other hand a cultural expression in which diverse systems of creeds, beliefs, world-views and spiritual disciplines are all held together by two dominant ideas—namely, those of toleration and realisation. It is the pre-supposition of such a culture that it should interpret every theology as a symbol devised by the human mind to describe the Supreme Fact which can never be exhausted or fully expressed by any single description. According to the historical, social and intellectual environment in which they are born, and according to the spiritual evolu-

tion of the people for whom they are meant, these theologies may differ in many points even in important respects. This, however, is natural, and need not be interpreted as contradictions disproving the truth of these theologies or detracting their spiritual value. Differences even in symbols meant to convey more or less the same spirit form a matter of common experience in life. A people from the soil of whose culture a symbol has grown will easily catch the spirit behind that particular symbol. Through the medium of the symbol their minds will find it easy to establish contact with the underlying universal principle, and thus the very same symbols which appear meaningless or even abhorrent to an alien, may be a source of inspiration and illumination to the people who have produced them. This is a fact that holds good in all branches of culture, but more so in the field of religion which is essentially a value science. The spiritual genius of the Hindu race has discovered this important principle and has as a consequence shown a spirit of accommodation towards diverse kinds of theologies—a spirit which the protagonists of exclusive theologies can never understand.

If every theology is to be tolerated and accepted, then how can society be safe-guarded against frauds and against systems of thought and practices that are seen to have a decidedly corrupting influence on the minds of men ? This is a pertinent question that may crop up in the reader's mind at this stage. The answer is that a tree is to be known by its fruits. The value of a theology is to be judged by the types of character it is able

to produce as well as by the examples of saintliness and God-realisation with which it demonstrates its genuineness. From this has sprung the second dominant idea of Hinduism that religion is realisation. A theology, if it is to be taken seriously, must propound a system of spiritual disciplines that can take a sincere follower to the certitude of God and to the 'peace that passeth understanding.' And as a proof of its promise it must also be able to point to a line of saints and God-men who have followed the path, gained spiritual realisation, and have lived lives of exemplary character and spiritual endeavour. Even a new theology may be accepted, if it comes from a man of this type, and is seen to exercise an uplifting influence on the life of its followers. If men are left to themselves to find their spiritual level, without the interference of priests and organised churches, they are naturally bound to develop this very sane and rational outlook on the religious question. But unfortunately for humanity, the influence of the States, of politicians, of uncultured and ill-informed zealots, and above all of ecclesiastical hierarchies has deflected religions from their true and natural course, and invested them with a sense of cocksureness in regard to the Highest Truth and a spirit of vehement opposition to other theological versions than their own. The only way to lift out religions from this morass into which they have fallen is to make them conscious of the symbolical nature of all theologies and the need of shifting their emphasis from dogma to realisation—in fact to inform them with these two special developments of Hindu thought.

### **The Ideal of True Spiritual Aggressiveness**

The reader may wonder what on earth this has got to do with Aggressive Hinduism, the high-sounding title we used in the beginning. Is this not the same old attitude of the milksop who seeks to hide his impotence behind an imposing philosophy? Or is it not the philosophy of a mere sceptic who feels no earnestness for any religion and gives the pompous name of religious tolerance or religious cosmopolitanism to what is really an attitude of religious indifference? Or at best is it not merely a form of spiritual callousness and inertia which feels no moral urge to bestow on others what one conceives to be the highest good, or a type of spiritual self-centredness which feels jealous of others rising to the same eminence as oneself?

We admit that the attitude we described before can degenerate into one or other of those perverse outlooks, and Hinduism of to-day is having a moribund existence, because such degeneration has actually taken place in it. But what we want to insist on is that true spiritual aggressiveness is possible only through such an attitude and not through the narrow intolerance and militancy of the so-called missionary faiths. In its best days Hinduism succeeded in fearlessly expressing these distinctive features of its spiritual philosophy, and our conception of a Hinduism made aggressive is the same in which it succeeds in recapturing that spirit which enabled her once to weld together the diverse forms of theologies, races and their cultures into a system in so effective a fashion that while they retain their special genius they have ceased to exist as



rival faiths and exclusive social groups with conflicting interests.

How was this achieved in the past is the question we have to consider now. In pre-Muslim days Hinduism had to come into contact with diverse faiths and diverse cultures. There were the great daughter religions known historically as Buddhism and Jainism and then came from time to time various foreign invaders—the Persians, the Greeks, the Parthians, the Yuechis, the Kushans and the Huns, all with distinct habits, customs and religious traditions. But these people together with their religion and culture have been entirely absorbed into what we call now-a-days as Hinduism. Long even before the admission of these extraneous elements there was the contact between the Aryan and the Dravidian cultures, and to-day these have been so indistinguishably blended together that even the desperate attempts of those who want to revive the memories of old and forgotten conflicts have entirely failed in separating the cultural yarns that have gone into the make up of the pattern of modern Hinduism.

### **Strength as the source of True Religious Liberalism**

This remarkable capacity for absorption that our ancestors evinced was the result of their own internal strength and the catholicity of their outlook. Unlike our modern specimens of piety, the pioneers of Hindu culture in the past were never afraid of their holiness being contaminated by the look of one man or the shadow of another. Where strength is, fear is not. Firmly established in the spiritual outlook characteristic of their culture, they could very easily accept the customs, manners and

beliefs of other people without in any way losing their own individuality and distinctiveness. Through mutual sympathy born of such spirit of accommodation, social groups of different affinities were easily drawn into the sphere of Hindu cultural influence, and when they came into contact with the core of Hinduism, they succumbed to its superior spiritual power. Hinduism accepted several elements from their religion and culture and Hindu theologies in turn reshaped them in such a way as to bring them into agreement with their tenets. The whole process went on quite naturally and without any show of unspiritual pride and arrogance on the part of the dominant culture. Perhaps the greatest achievement of India in this respect is the silent absorption of Buddhism, and this has been done by adapting the Buddhist philosophies and Tantric worship in accordance with some of the fundamental principles of Hinduism. The clear signs of this adaptation can be detected in many phases of Hindu philosophy, Tantricism and temple-worship.

### **Contrast between Hindu and other Ideals**

This work of cultural absorption has not, however, been complete, and in a country like India which has been subjected to successive waves of foreign invasion from time to time, this is a problem that perpetually stares us in the face. But for the unsuccessful attempts of Nanak and Kabir, we may say that for all practical purposes the task of effecting a fusion between Hinduism, and Muslim culture and religion has not even been taken up as yet, and the rise of Christianity as another distinctive

type of religion in modern times has increased the magnitude of the problem. Due to the total incapacity of the present generation of Indians to tackle this situation, India finds herself rent asunder by communal conflicts and religious animosities. Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity have all got a long and rich religious tradition and a powerful spiritual appeal. They have attracted minds at all grades of cultural evolution to seek solace in their message. As such none of them is likely to yield entirely to any of the other two, yet the chief aim of both Islam and Christianity in India, as proclaimed by their chief spokesmen in this country, is to convert the whole population of India into Muslims and Christians. Claiming as they both do to be universal religions, they maintain that they have got a mandate from the 'Lord Almighty' through their respective founders, to bring the whole world into line with their dogmatic creeds. Indeed, the 'Lord Almighty' must be either very foolish or dangerously mischievous to be giving mandates to people in such a way as to bring the mandataries themselves into conflict eventually, after they have destroyed the beliefs of poor heathens and kaffirs. Taking the case of India itself, even if the Christianity and Islam succeed in swallowing up the whole of the Hindu population, the adherents of India's indigenous religion, still it will only bring these two religionists into unrelenting conflict which they cannot end until the one destroys the other. We are however yet to know on which side the sympathy of 'Lord Almighty' will be since he is claimed to have given mandates to both the parties. One thing, however, is cer-

tain, and that is that inspite of the letter of authority from the 'God Almighty' the vast bulk of Hindus are not likely to yield to this type of aggressiveness, and give up the convictions that have been bringing spiritual solace to their race for countless generations. Despotie Muslim sovereigns like Aurangazeb wielding unquestioned authority over the whole of India attempted this and failed, and we do not think that there is greater chances of success for such a programme at the present day.

Hence the only type of aggressiveness that may be trusted to bring about a cultural and religious unity in India is India's indigenous spiritual aggressiveness that has performed miraculous feats of absorption in the past. It is an aggressiveness that disdains any parade of superiority and the belittling of other's faith, and its end consists not in destroying the intellectual and material symbols of religion that have been the channels of spiritual inspiration to different people, but in creating in other religionists an outlook that can appreciate the value of religious symbols developed by cultural environments other than their own. In modern times, however, Muslim and Christian methods of religious propaganda seem to have unduly influenced several newly formed Hindu missionary groups, and as a result the latter are showing an un-Hindu zeal in conducting a crusade of abuse and villification against rival religions, as if they were thereby going to obliterate these from the minds of men. Such methods may succeed among a few uncultured people and may result in some individual conversions. But on the whole, in place of easing the religious situation, it is only going to make matters worse.

The failure of the modern Hindu missionary movement from the broad cultural point of view is largely due to this fact. Unless the Hindu goes out into the Muslim and the Christian camp with a view to make the spiritual experience of these religions his own, and in so doing completely Hinduises the outlook of these religions, there seems to be little chance of absorbing the large mass of their adherents.

### **The Work Ahead**

Such a procedure has two presuppositions. In the first place, Hinduism should become more self-conscious, and its cultural and social heritage must become more consolidated and unified. The genuine cultural content of Hinduism has as yet been absorbed only by the higher castes. There are large numbers of people who have not hitherto been influenced by what may be described as higher Hinduism. There are still larger numbers described as 'untouchables' and 'unapproachables' who occupy only the fringes of Hinduism, and have remained practically untouched by its cultural life. The violent missionary propaganda of other religions has always been directed against this vulnerable spot in the social body of Hinduism. This cannot be adequately checked until these classes are truly Hinduised and made to feel that the best cultural traditions of India are their own. By the expression 'making Hinduism self-conscious and culturally consolidated' we mean this infusing of the spiritual and cultural consciousness of Hinduism into those who are as yet only nominally Hindu, and thereby making Hinduism as a whole *aware* of its own existence and its mission in the world.

Next Hinduism has to go beyond itself and embrace the spiritual and cultural content of other religions as its own. One of the reasons that makes modern Hinduism hesitant in undertaking this work is the consciousness of its own internal weakness as we have pointed out before, and if this is counteracted by the growth of true spiritual self-consciousness and cultural consolidation, we shall be fit to discharge the great work which our ancestors had once accomplished. We shall have to give up the isolation we have been maintaining from Muslim and Christian communities and develop a genuine appreciation of their culture and spiritual standpoint. Hindus often blame the Muslims now-a-days for being communally minded and outlandish in their cultural outlook. But the blame for this rests as much on the Hindu as on the Muslim. The Hindu looks down upon the Muslim as a *Mleccha*, as an impure person unfit to be associated with in any way, and his culture too is viewed as something foreign which ought to have no place in this land. Under such circumstances one cannot but expect hostile reactions on the part of the Muslim, as we find it actually to-day. Those, whose bodies one hates and despises, cannot be expected to co-operate with one in thought and action. Hatred will be answered only by hatred, never by love.

The remedy against Muslim communalism lies more with the Hindu than with the Muslim. If the Muslim refuses to give up his Turkish cap, let Hindus accept it and give it a place side by side with the turban and Indian cap. If the Muslim persists in his preference for Arabic names for his children, the Hindu

also can adopt them and have in his family Alis, Rahmans and Abduls by the side of Ramas, Krishnas, and Govindas. Along with Dasra, Pongal, and Krishna Jayanti, he can also observe Ramzan, Mohorum and the birthday of the Prophet. These suggestions, which we consider to be true implications of cultural absorption, may appear preposterous to many a Hindu but that only shows how far we yet are from the ideal of cultural unification ?

More than all this the Hindu race has to absorb and Hinduise the spiritual message of the Quran and the Bible. The English language has familiarised the Hindu mind to a great extent with the Bible and the personality of Jesus, and large numbers of Hindus have got genuine regard for both, although they may not subscribe to the dogmatic creeds of the churches. But with reference to the Quran and the personality of the Prophet Muhammed, the Hindu outlook requires a radical change. For want of first-hand knowledge and

due to the study of the writings of unsympathetic scholars, a thick cloud of misunderstanding shuts out the Hindu mind from appreciating the personality and teachings of the Prophet. Therefore we want today a batch of saintly Hindu scholars, versed in the Quran and the Bible, who could interpret these books in the light of Hindu religious experience, and a set of intrepid missionaries of great spiritual calibre who could preach a Hinduised Islam and Christianity to the Muslims and Christians, and an Islamised and Christianised Hinduism to the Hindus. That the spiritual content of these religions can coalesce has been amply demonstrated in the life of Sri Ramakrishna ; and in addition to liberal scholars and missionaries, we require in furtherance of his experience an inspired prophet-poet in the crucible of whose genius may be melted the cultural and spiritual legacies of all these religions to be recast into a new Gita that may appeal alike to the Hindu, the Muslim and the Christian.

## THE CONCEPTION OF GOD IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

*By Prof. Jadunath Sinha, M.A., Ph.D.*

[Dr. Sinha is the Professor of Philosophy in Meerut College. In the following article he gives us a masterly survey of the idea of God in the writings of contemporary philosophers. The general reader, unacquainted with European philosophy, may not follow the writer in all the details, but he can without difficulty grasp the main currents of thought that are shaping the modern conception of God. In the past philosophers and theologians could never think of Him except as changeless, infinite and perfect. To-day in the writings of the philosophers treated below we find that change, finitude and limitation are the essential features of the Deity. What is more, we come across conceptions of God as a member of the society of selves, of God who forms a fraction of the Absolute, and God who is not but is to be. It is hazardous to point to any Indian conception of the Deity as parallel to these. But is there not a rough resemblance between the God of the Yoga philosophy and God as a

member of a society of selves ; and between Ramanuja's conception of an organic absolute consisting of Iswara, souls and matter, and the Absolute of the Personal Idealists which is God plus the world ?]

**R**ATIONALISM or intellectualism was the characteristic sign of the last century. It reigned supreme in the first half of the last century ; but in the latter half there were certain rebellious tendencies against rationalism. Till the middle of the last century Hegel's Absolute Idealism was the reigning philosophy in Europe. Kant was a master-mind. His Idealism was developed by Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. According to Hegel, the Absolute Spirit is the beginning and the end of all reality. It manifests itself in the world of objects and reduplicates itself in finite spirits. The world of interconnected objects is the expression or manifestation of God ; and finite spirits are the finite reproductions of God. God is the immanent essence of the world and finite spirits. The whole reality is spiritual. Everything real is rational. Evil is a necessary stage in the evolution of God. Man is not absolutely free ; he cannot do whatever he likes ; he can only carry out that ideal which God has chalked out for him and reveals to him. Everything in the world is inevitable ; all events,—even human actions,—are predetermined by God ; nothing can happen contrary to His plan. Man cannot revolt against the plan of God. Man's freedom is practically reduced to nothing ; morality consists in the realisation of that ideal which has already been realised in God. Man cannot create anything *new* ; he can simply acquire that perfection which is already embodied in God. God is an eternally fulfilled reality ; He is a self-complete, all round, and all comprehensive reality. This is

the sum and substance of the philosophy of Hegel. He approaches the reality through reason or intellect, and posits the Universal Reason or Absolute Spirit behind everything. Hence his doctrine is called by the modern critics Intellectualism, Absolutism, Monism, and Determinism.

Can such a philosophy satisfy the human soul ? In such a world is there any scope for novelty, free creation, adventure and romance ? Is not God supreme everywhere ? Does He not swamp the freedom and individuality of man and make him a passive instrument in His hand in the world-drama ? Such a " block universe " can never satisfy the rebellious, adventurous spirit of the modern man. He wants absolute freedom, absolute self-sufficiency. He frets and fumes at the idea of the absolute monarchy of God ; this he can never bear ; so he is eager to overthrow it either to take the reign of the world-government in his own hands or to recognise the limited monarchy of God. He is eager to deny the very existence of God or at best to recognise Him as a finite, struggling and toiling spirit co-operating with other finite spirits. Democracy is the order of the day. So, the absolute monarchy of God is an anachronism to-day. Moreover, democracy in its extreme form (I mean,—mobocracy) does not listen to the voice of reason ; it is guided by blind impulse, primitive instinct, feeling, will, and imagination. So, the modern philosopher does not worship the Goddess of Reason ; he has dethroned the long-worshipped deity and enthroned the lesser deities of instinct, intuition, aesthetic experi-

ence, love, will, action, utility and so on. The ruined shrines of the God-  
 less of Reason have been invaded by  
 these rebel forces of our nature. Thus  
 contemporary philosophy has sound-  
 ed the death-knell of Absolutism and  
 Intellectualism.

The greatest objection against  
 Absolutism is that it cannot reconcile  
 the existence of evils and imperfec-  
 tions with the infinitude and omni-  
 potence of God. So Hartman thought  
 that the ultimate reality, which is  
 the ground and source of the universe,  
 must be an Unconscious Will, not  
 Self-conscious Reason. Schopen-  
 hauer thought that it cannot be even  
 unconscious, it is an irrational blind  
 will groping in the dark for realisa-  
 tion of its object. This doctrine  
 naturally prepared the way for  
 naturalism. Herbert Spencer thought  
 that the ultimate reality is an un-  
 known and unknowable force which  
 has given rise to matter, life, and  
 mind. Haeckel also derives the whole  
 universe from one unknown and un-  
 knowable substance, of course  
 material in nature. Thus Hegel's  
 intellectualism gradually degenerated  
 into naturalism and agnosticism.

But how to escape from the toils of  
 agnosticism? Agnosticism means the  
 poverty of the intellect. So we can  
 avoid the pitfall of agnosticism if  
 we shake off our allegiance to intel-  
 lect or reason and fall back on other  
 elements of our nature which give us  
 unmistakable signs of the reality.  
 Such an attempt has been made by  
 certain French philosophers. Secrétan  
 holds that the essence of the world  
 is an act of unfettered expansion,—  
 an act of love and infinite benevo-  
 lence; hence the real tool of philoso-  
 phy is artistic inspiration and religi-  
 ous devotion, not logical definition

or scientific analysis. "Beauty," as  
 Ravaisson says, "and more especially  
 beauty in its most divine and per-  
 fect form, contains the secret of the  
 world." The cosmic process is the  
 spontaneous creation of a marvellous  
 work of art. Wilbois unites the  
 aesthetic sense with the sense of pro-  
 gress to apprehend the spontaneous  
 self-expansion of the reality. Blondel  
 holds that in love and sacrifice will  
 be found the fullest revelation of  
 Being: without love there can be no  
 understanding. Love is the organ of  
 perfect knowledge; it puts us in  
 loving communion with others, where-  
 as selfishness isolates us and makes  
 us impenetrable. In this supreme  
 act of self-abnegation,—in this abso-  
 lute surrender of will to the true  
 Being,—the true and intimate experi-  
 ence of the absolute reality will be  
 found. These are certainly very ele-  
 vating thoughts fraught with deep  
 significance. Such a moral and  
 aesthetic conception of the universe  
 more satisfies the cravings of the  
 human heart than the "block uni-  
 verse" of the Absolutist. But these  
 romantic philosophers do not bring  
 out the full significance of their doc-  
 trine; nor do they base it on the  
 solid foundation of philosophical  
 speculation. Even the so-called moral  
 or aesthetic sense, love or benevo-  
 lence must be strengthened and sup-  
 ported by reason; otherwise it will  
 give us unwarranted dogmas or ill-  
 digested half-truths.

An attempt has been made by  
 Bergson, the greatest French philoso-  
 pher of the present day, to give us a  
 systematic philosophy of Intuition-  
 ism. He is an out and out anti-intel-  
 lectualist. He discredits intellect in  
 this way. Intellect gives us an ex-  
 ternal view of things. It can never

give us the inner kernel. It hovers about the reality, it can never enter into the heart of the reality and feel its life-pulse. It is only in intuition that we feel at one with the object, enter into its inner life, and know all its secrets. So intuition is the true organ of our knowledge. Intellect is evolved by life ; and so it cannot take hold of life ; it can apprehend matter alone. It is intuition alone that can embrace life, because through it the knower becomes the known. And what does it intimate to us about the nature of the reality ? The reality is in perpetual flow and flux ; it is constant change and movement ; it is life-current—*elan vital*. There is nothing fixed, permanent, eternal and immobile in reality ; all is change, novelty, creation. The world is neither determined by the past nor by the future ; there is neither mechanism nor teleology in the world ; there is neither any cause of anything, nor any end or purpose of anything. The reality is creative evolution or free spontaneous self-expansion, absolutely undetermined and free. It is all change, novelty, creation, evolution. Every change is a unique creation ; nothing repeats itself in nature. Creative evolution may be compared to the spreading of different branches from a single root. The *elan vital* goes on spreading out new branches, creating new novelties. Matter, life, and consciousness are such branches. The life-current now and then meets obstacles and is congealed. This is called matter. Matter is imprisoned or arrested life. Life is dynamic while matter is static. Just as growth and development of the self are due to conquest over material obstacles which thwart the evolution of the self, so the evolution of the cosmic life

requires the resisting medium of matter. But why life meets obstacles in matter Bergson cannot say. The dualism of life and matter is an enigma to him. But is there any God in his system ? If the dualism of life and matter is the last word of his philosophy, then the over-surg-ing life-current itself may be regarded as a kind of God opposed by matter, the evil principle. Bergson's reality is unceasing evolution of something new—incessant creative work. It cannot be considered to be God, since God cannot be 'a continuity of shooting out.' But Bergson does not confess that his system is atheistic. He feels that his system gives us a free and creating God. God is the universal flux and is the only reality. He encounters obstacles in matter which arrests his progress. Bergson exalts the flux of the world with all its defects and discards to the high position of divinity. But such an incomplete, imperfect God in the making can never satisfy the spiritual cravings of man. Sometimes Bergson suggests that God is the source of both life and matter. But he is not a free, creating, moral, and intelligent God. Muirhead truly remarks, "If all this is movement, incessant life, action, liberty, what room is there for the fixed thoughts and purposes that theists attribute to the Creator ?" Bergson's God is inadequate to the needs of the religious soul. Thus Bergson's intuitionism is a reaction against the intellectualism and absolutism of Hegel and his followers.

There is another reaction against Hegelian intellectualism and absolutism in Anglo-American pragmatism. According to pragmatism, utility, practical efficiency, or serviceableness

is the test or criterion of truth. An idea is true when it works, i.e., when it is successful, when it fulfills its function, or performs what is demanded of it. The idea of a knife, for example, is true if it actually leads to the fruition of its purpose, if it actually leads to cutting. The idea of an object is true if it actually leads to the attainment of the object in living, concrete, immediate experience. Thus utility is the test of truth. Bergson takes his stand on intuition, while William James, his great American admirer, takes his stand on immediate sense-perception. Bergson takes intuition in the sense of higher immediate experience *above* the intellect. James takes intuition in the sense of lower immediate sense-perception *below* intellect. The intuition of Bergson gives us one central life-current at the heart of the universe; the immediate sense-perception of James gives us an ever-changing "pluralistic universe." Absolutism gives us God as the all-embracing reality. Absolutism is monistic. But monism is fatalistic. To it human freedom is an illusion. Whatever is, is necessary or inevitable, and anything else is impossible. The iron hand of necessity grips the universe. But pragmatism gives us a pluralistic universe of unconnected objects. Its world is yet in the making, and depends for its fulfilment on man's efforts. The whole is in the course of realisation. The sum-total of things is not yet a simple system but a totality of conflicting individuals. The world is plastic; it is moulded and fashioned by spirits. God has a place in the pluralistic universe of James; but his God is an elder brother of all spiritual beings, vaster, wiser, and more powerful, but not essentially different from

them. James offers us a God who is finite and limited, but still lends his ears to our prayers and looks after our wants.

But what is the necessity of God at all in a pluralistic universe? To James, the ideas of God and the immortality of the soul are true because they are useful ideas; they make our life better and worth living; without them we cannot live a harmonious life. "I believe in God," says James, "not because I have experienced his presence, but because I need it so that it must be true. If there is not God there would be a great hush, a great void of life." "On pragmatist principles, if the hypothesis of God works satisfactorily in the widest sense of the word, it is true." (*Pragmatism*, p. 299.) James believes in a finite and limited God who struggles with evil in co-operation with finite spirits. James regards us all as friends and collaborators of God. God and men are fellow-soldiers in the struggle to banish evil from the world. In the struggle with evil, James feels sure that God will triumph over evil in the end. Evil is real and positive. But it is only temporary and partial. It is not the last word of life, though it is an essential phase of its existence. The God of James is not the Absolute of the Absolutist. If the Absolute exists, it is the whole of which God is an ideal portion, but the Absolute or the whole is devoid of the attributes ascribed to it by the theist or the Absolutist. The Absolute is not a religious Being. James says, "God in the religious life of ordinary men, is the name not of the whole of things, heaven forbid, but only of the ideal tendency in things, believed in as a superhuman person, who calls us to co-operate



in his purposes, and who furthers ours if they are worthy. He works in an external environment, has limits and has enemies. The only God worthy of the name must be finite. If the Absolute exists in addition, then the Absolute is only the wider cosmic whole of which our God is but the most ideal portion, and which in the more usual human sense is hardly to be termed a religious being at all." (*Pluralistic Universe*, p. 125.) Thus James' pluralism overthrows the monarchy of God and leaves man absolutely free to realise his ideal in the elastic world full of opportunities for the play of his freedom.

Another pragmatist of England, Dr. Schiller gives us a similar conception of the universe. Schiller holds that self is an ultimate reality. No philosophy can dissolve it away. The world has been evolved by the co-operation of God and other finite spirits. The final goal of the world, towards which it is moving, is the formation of perfect individuals in a perfect society. The final state of the world is the eternal and perfect activity of perfected individuals. The eternal state is not one of inaction and stagnation. Perfection is not rest but activity. Schiller also admits only a finite God. He does not believe in the omnipotence of God. He says, "Omnipotence becomes impotence in the absence of resistance." (*Riddles*, p. 355). God is force, and force implies resistance. God, in order to enforce his will against the world, requires a world which limits him. God is not all; he is only a factor in all things. Thus God is finite. In fact, an Infinite God cannot be the God of religious communion. Schiller says, "An in-

finite God can have neither personality nor consciousness, for they both depend upon limitation. Personality rests on the distinction of one person from another, consciousness on the distinction of Self and Not-Self. An all-embracing person, therefore, is an utterly unmeaning phrase, and if it meant anything, it would mean something utterly subversive of all religion." Again he says, "The attribute of Infinity contradicts and neutralises all the other attributes of God, and makes it impossible to ascribe to the Deity either personality, or consciousness, or power, or intelligence, or wisdom, or goodness, or purpose; an infinite Deity does not effect a single one of the functions which the religious consciousness demands of God." (*Riddles*, p. 306). Schiller is dead against the conception of an infinite God. "The attribute of infinity," he says, "so far from exalting the Deity, would rather make him into a devil, careless of, and even rejoicing in, evil and misery, infinitely worse than the Devil of tradition, because he is armed with omnipotence." (*Riddles*, p. 311).

So according to Schiller, religion and philosophy demand a belief in a personal and limited God. (*Riddles*, p. 316). He makes the finite spirits uncaused and uncreated; they are co-eternal with God. Schiller's God is only an ego among egos, a One among many, and not One underlying the many. He is a finite being limited by the existence of other individuals.

The doctrine of finite and limited God is to be found even among certain Idealists of the present day, who are called Personal Idealists. They are not Absolute Idealists. Professor Howison emphasises the reality of

selves, human freedom, and the existence of a personal God. He resolves the universe into a number of self-subsistent individuals. The temporal world is not evolved and sustained by one Eternal Mind but many eternal minds. The world is a real multiplicity of spirits. The spirits are absolutely free; they are uncaused and uncreated; God is not their efficient cause or creator; God is their final cause; finite spirits are moving towards the perfection of God to establish the City of God. In the society of selves there are all possible grades of spirits from the lowest to the highest; and at the top of them all there is a supreme self which is free from all temporal imperfection. This supra-temporal supreme self is God, the pure Eternal. Man and God are co-eternal with each other. God as personal is a member of the society of selves; as supreme, He is the central or dominant member. God is limited by other selves; but still He is infinite, for all minds are infinite in the qualitative sense.

Rev. Rashdall, another Personal Idealist, also is an advocate of the current conception of a finite God. He draws a distinction between God and the Absolute. God is a person, and personality implies distinction and limitation. A person should distinguish himself not only from other objects but also from other persons. Thus a person can exist only as a one among many. God is

a supreme person to whom the world of things and persons is an object. The supreme spirit is not the whole since it is limited by other finite selves. The Absolute is the whole, which is God *plus* the finite spirits. God is a part of the Absolute. Rashdall says, "God and the spirits are the Absolute—not God alone. Together they form a Unity, but that Unity is not the unity of self-consciousness; nor can it be thought of as even analogous to personal unity." (*Theory of Good and Evil*, Vol. II, pp. 240-241). "The Absolute cannot be identified with God, so long as God is thought of as a self-conscious Being. The Absolute must include God and all other consciousnesses, not as isolated and unrelated beings, but as intimately related (in whatever way) to Him and to one another and as forming with Him a system or Unity. And, in so far as God is not any of these spirits, however they may be ultimately related to Him, He is not, in the most obvious sense of the word, infinite. The term 'infinite' would seem properly to belong to that Absolute which includes God and other spirits." (*Ibid*, pp. 239-240). Thus God is a member of the society of selves. He is finite and limited by other selves, but this limitation of God by finite spirits is a self-imposed limitation. Martineau also believes in the self-imposed limitation of God to make room for human freedom which does not compromise the sovereignty of God.

(To be continued)

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## AT THE TOUCH OF THE MOTHER

*By Dorothy Kruger*

[We postpone publishing "The Reminiscences of the Holy Mother" this month, and give in its place the following short but striking article on the Mother by one who is an enthusiastic reader of the Reminiscences. Miss Dorothy Kruger of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York wrote this article in reply to our query—what it is that makes women in the West interested in the Holy Mother and her ideal of life. Her reply which is both pointed and precise speaks for itself, and helps one realise how the very simplicity, unostentatiousness and dignified feminineness of the Holy Mother can facilitate what may be described as the process of soul-making. To those in this country, who find nothing worth preserving in the Indian ideal of womanhood, it will be a revelation to know that there are aspects of it deemed supremely valuable by people outside.]

UCH has been written about the cultured family woman whose predominant interest is the sacrifice of self for the well-being of her husband and the perfect development of her children. Still more has been said about the society woman who whirls from one sense pleasure to another, in a state of nervous helplessness. But the potent force of womanhood to-day is the working girl—the thousands and thousands of women, who, through economic conditions, are forced to assume the responsibilities of men.

New York is hard. These steel-granite structures, of which we are so proud, rising higher and higher until all sunlight is shut out of the streets of lower New York, are but symbols of the concerns they house. Corporations fattening at the centre reach out tentacles and gather into themselves the lesser concerns. Competition is the keynote. Even within the organisation itself, branch offices in various cities strain against each other in competition.

Without sufficient mental and emotional training, out of the common strata of society, girls are thrown into these business machines. In many cases the father of the girl is dead or

incapacitated, the brothers married, a younger child at school. She and a sister or two maintain the home and the dependents. With only a public school and a six-months business school training behind these girls, their plastic minds assimilate the greed and jealousy and competition around them. Each girl learns to strive against the other in output of work and efficiency and favour of superiors. Each girl competes with the other in acquisition of smart-looking clothes, beauty culture, and attention of men. Day after day, enervated by endless subway riding, they exhaust themselves under the relentless drive of efficiency experts. After a few years there are some who to escape make any kind of marriage. Others, emulating the moral standards of their masculine co-workers, in the name of freedom, plunge into unrestrained sense pleasures. Still others, stifled by their environment at home and business, study. The colleges and universities in the City are crowded with girls, who after the day's work, taking advantage of special courses offered at night, study some art or science or business organisation. Intellectually sharpened, they assume more and more the

responsibilities of their employers. They identify themselves completely with the man with whom they work. Thus, during their formative years, completely under the influence of men, they become masculine minded.

Their attitude towards the home? It is a place where one sleeps, and occasionally eats a meal. It is a place where exhausted nerves are constantly flayed by demands for money, for explanation of late hours, for an insight into the girl's personal life. The girl has no energy and time for, or interest in, the small details of the home. There is no meeting ground for mother and daughter. Individuality and self-centered interests are stressed and independence flaunted by the girl.

Fewer and fewer successful business women marry for having tasted the wine of economic freedom. Being constant victims of male selfishness and egoism they have no illusions. Having witnessed too many betrayals they have lost faith in all things. Stronger than their desire for children is the desire to shield such potential beings from the pitiless road they themselves have had to walk, and alone.

Suddenly there is the awareness of the utter futility of their lives. They realise they are living in a vortex. They cry out and they hear not even an echo of their cry. They think of God. But what is God? Long ago has vanished their idea of an extra-cosmic God. The sky-scrapers themselves destroyed the illusion. All these years these women depended solely upon themselves and now they themselves appear meaningless. On a business day, during a lunch hour, they perhaps go into a church—to listen to a talk on economics or poli-

tics. Another day they perhaps try a church of a different denomination. The church insults their intelligence. Christ they do not know.

Into such lives is coming the influence of the Holy Mother. Into the darkness we have screamed our rebellion, and Swami Vivekananda, being the essence of compassion, has reached out and taken us by the hand. Now he is pouring into our arid hearts the ideals of Sri Ramakrishna. For the first time we are learning about love. For the first time we are being taught the meaning of God. Immortality is at last being made reasonable.

Swami Vivekananda has brought us to the Holy Mother. We stand in awe and reverence before such self-effacement and humility and wisdom. We are enchanted by the beauty of her face. For the first time we want to be *feminine*. Like burning sand we are drinking in the sweetness and passivity of the Holy Mother. Our center of consciousness is shifting from the material to the spiritual. We no longer see our business environment as a mill to grind us but as a training ground. And as we understand more and more the Holy Mother's steadiness of purpose, her great humility and overflowing gentleness, we are unwittingly radiating peace. Amongst ourselves we are co-operating instead of competing, we are giving instead of grasping, we are becoming passive instead of assuredly aggressive. We are welcoming each experience, no matter how secular, as the means of unfoldment of our higher self. We no longer see our home as anything but a safety zone to which we come each night out of the noise and confusion of the City. We are learning

to use, instead of abuse, our freedom. We no longer experience friction, and the more objective our previous life becomes the more clearly we see that we ourselves were the generators of all the friction we ever experienced. Now, with lowered head, we realise we were to the mother who bore us, not an object of economic utility but a part of her very being gone hopelessly beyond her power of understanding. We were her own blood which refusing to flow through her heart, congealed in her veins and froze her to loneliness.

Out of the complexity of our lives the Holy Mother is making simplicity. She is leading us not *beside* the still waters but into the calm and cool of our being, from whence, poised, we emerge, our hands and intellect to business and home, our heart and mind to her. She is leading us, as fast as we ourselves permit, into our heritage; and into that *femininity* we are taking with us all the *masculine strength* of mind we so dearly bought.

We are not deluding ourselves that, economically speaking, our lives will ever be different. We work just as hard. We become just as exhausted.

But this, now, is of no import. Before, whichever way we turned there was nothing but a blank wall of futility. Now, whichever way we turn there is an avenue of purpose. And we have learned, under strain, how the remembrance of the calm face of the Holy Mother acts as a benediction and an impetus to rise mentally above all external circumstances.

What is true of us holds equally good for every woman of the West regardless of social position; for, who, being constantly restless with the burden of power and selfish love, will not become a greater woman for living immersed in the ideal of service and renunciation? Who, having tasted emotional solitude and self-restraint, does not know these things to be good? Who, thinking herself wise, will not, at the slightest intellectual contact with the wisdom of the Holy Mother, know herself to be foolish and sit humbly before the lotus feet of that divine ideal? Before heart's hunger there is no question whether an ideal is of East or West; there is but feast or starvation of the soul. Too long were we hungry. Now we feast. Salutations to the Holy Mother.

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# BUDDHISM AND VEDAS

*By Rev. Bhikku Nyanapiya*

[Rev. Bhikku Nyanapiya, formerly known as Mr. J. Pistor, is a German Buddhist monk, who is at present in Ceylon and will shortly be going over to his fatherland to preach the Dhamma. In this article he draws our attention to a line of thought which both Hindus and Buddhists may very well accept with advantage. We in India can make an immediate beginning by evincing more enthusiasm in the celebration of the Buddha's birth-anniversary. It is scandalous that while we observe festivals connected with innumerable Gods and Goddesses, we do nothing to honour the memory of one of the greatest, according to some the greatest, of Indians and of men ever born in this world. Such great ones are the highest symbols of the Deity.]

**B**UDDHISM and Hinduism are as it were the two oldest branches of the immortal Vedic tree of knowledge. Both spring from the common source like twin-currents of the mighty Ganges of Indo-Aryan thought. It was the supreme vision of the Oneness of Truth illumining the hearts of the ancient Rishis of India that poured down from the sylvan silent height of the Himalayas as the lofty revelations set forth in the Vedas. It was again this vision that made it possible for Buddha, the greatest son of India, to go out and conquer Asia by giving to the world the greatest ideal of love, and to be called the Perfectly Enlightened One.

But it is for every seeker after truth a matter of deep regret that the modern adherents of these two sister faiths are in blissful ignorance of their common source. Each has very unjustly misunderstood the other and has created artificial barriers between them by laying emphasis on minor details which have been exaggerated out of all proportion. But now in this Age of Synthesis and Unity, we know very well that the light of sympathy and unifying wisdom is far more important than the subtleties of showy Pandits and hairsplitting intellectuals. Both the Hindus and

the Buddhists should make it a point to find out common bases on which they can again unite and embrace each other ; for the one cannot live without the other, and both form a complete set and agree essentially in principles. The non-essentials or the different ways of presenting metaphysical conceptions are due to ethnologic and temperamental distinctions and to the free use of symbols to express the Inexpressible. We can be united and yet have different opinions.

If we adopt the right standpoint in a connected historical study of Indian thought as an organic cultural entity and penetrate deeply into the heart of Buddhistic and Brahminical thought, it will be perfectly clear that it is difficult, if not absurd, to draw a hard and fast line of demarcation between them; for the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Tipitakas form the classical, undivided background for the mind and thought of India. Only blind devotion and narrowness of mind after the manner of sectarians and dogmatic scholars are capable of showing divergences between these currents of thought.

Professor E. B. Havell, perhaps the greatest authority on Indian Art, has made an epochal discovery

which he declares in his "Ideals of Indian Art" and "Indian Sculpture and Painting." He states that the golden thread of Vedic Idealism not only runs as a common basis of Hindu and Buddhist cultures but also of Sikh and Jain, Moghul and Saracenic, Chinese and Japanese, Javanese and Balian as well as Arabian and Persian, i.e., of the whole Asiatic thought and cultures. That learned scholar finds a hint in the Mahabharata, the Volkscopos of India, to the effect that even Egyptian and Cretan cultures were indebted to old Aryan ideal (Surya, ancient Vedic Sun God). "The relation between Hinduism (the religion of the Veda) and Buddhism of the present day" says Swami Vivekananda "is nearly the same as between Judaism and Christianity. But with this difference, while the Jews rejected, nay crucified Him (Christ), the Hindu exalted the Sakya Muni to the seat of Divinity and worships Him. Buddha came not to destroy anything, but He was the fulfilment—the logical conclusion of Hinduism. Vedanta has no quarrel with Buddhism." Buddhism did not die a premature death, as it is held generally, but as Dr. A. Coomarasamy says in his "Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism" it gradually got merged into Hinduism from which it once issued. Vedic genius for expansion and assimilation absorbed it. It entered into the being of the purified Brahmin philosophy and became one with it.

The eminent Indian thinker, Prof. Radhakrishnan, in his book on Indian philosophy says that "the violent extermination of Buddhism in India is legendary. Paddhism and Brahmanism approached each other so much that for a time they were confused

and ultimately became one." The Nirguna Brahman of Sankara and the Sunya (tathata) of Nagarjuna are nearly the same. The true Atman or Self is the one undivided Existence and is not-self (Anatta, Sunya); "Nirvana is!" (Nagasena). The Buddhist teaching of Anattata, is the criticism given to the ego-essence of the Indian philosophies, and at the same time is the outcome of Enlightenment experienced by the Buddha. Nirvana also signifies the state in which there takes place the identification of Egolessness and Great Self. In this we see the realisation of Brahman which transcends the dualism of "to be" (sat) and "not to be" (asat). It is because of the similarity existing between the doctrines of these two great schools that the rivals of the monistic Vedanta have dubbed Sankara as a Prachehanna Bauddha, hidden Buddhist. Slow absorption and silent adaptation, and not priestly fanaticism and methodical destruction, are the causes of the fall of Buddhism.

Not only was the Buddha, who appeared at a time of most hideous and wide-spread materialism, born and brought up a Hindu, but he also lived and died a Hindu. He re-established and perfected the Sacred Order of Monks in its full purity; and he himself was a monk as he is the Buddha. "You must not imagine" says Vivekananda "that there was ever a religion in India with temples and priests of its own separated Order! Nothing of that sort. The idea was always within the Sanatana-dharma, only the influence of Buddha was paramount at one time and made the nation monastic." Mrs. Rhys Davids, a great living authority on Buddhism, who has spent about 40

years of her life in this study, writes in her "Sakiya Origins" that Sakiya Muni fulfilled, not destroyed, expanded not opposed the central teaching of the Upanishads. But he emphasised the concept of Man not as Being but as Becoming." "History of Pali Pitaka evolution," she says "is not unique and something new, but reflects an analogous history in the evolution of the Upanishads." Oldenberg justly points out in his "Buddha" that there was nothing in Buddha's attitude, generally, which could be regarded by his contemporaries as unusual and un-Indian. "The greatest Man ever born had not introduced anything fundamentally new." If there are differences, they are merely in small things, in different methods of expressing the one Truth, which have some value from the standpoint of men at certain levels of evolution; in fundamental ideas they are really one and the same. The Buddha was emphatic in declaring that the eightfold path of good living along which he led his followers was the ancient Aryan way of all the Buddhas of all time past and of all time yet to come. Even the metaphor of the eightfold path was borrowed from the fortified Aryan settlement. In the course of time the original message of the Blessed One had so much been twisted, deformed or rather 'smothered in the ritual and celebrant' by shrewd intellectualism and astute scholasticism, that in order to know the true Gospel of Buddha, we have "to winnow in the Pali Pitakas the grain from the chaff."

"I am convinced with Garbe and Jakobi that Buddha, as a philosopher, is doubtlessly dependent on Kapila and Patanjali" (T. W. Rhys Davids). Ashvaghosha in the *Buddha Charita*

says: The city of Kapilavastu, the birth-place of Buddha, received its name in honour of the great Kapila, the founder of the Sankhya Philosophy. Buddha was not only influenced by Sankhya but also by Yoga system whose Dhyana was taken up by the early Buddhists as 'Jhana' (Pali) from which the Chinese 'Ch'an' and the Japanese 'Zen' have come into being. The spiritual exercises of the Buddhist contemplative are taken over from the Brahminical sources. "Both the Sankhya and the Buddhist systems (Hinayana and Mahayana)" says Sir H. S. Gour in his 'Spirit of Buddhism' "have taken Vedantism as their basis." This basis, the quintessence of Indian thought may be summed up by saying that life and existence are One and that at the heart of the Universe is the One Ultimate Reality, the true Atman of everything, which is not self, free from all change and duality, outside all mean and miserable care for self. The two systems are like a stream that after flowing through its Vedic bed have burst its banks and have cut for themselves new channels but after taking an independent course to some distance have become reunited as the main stream from which they had become parted.

Buddha was a Vedic Protestant in the sense he stood against the degraded selfish belief in Atman (individualised soul), against blind worship and the sacrificial rites of the Vedas. It was his unique greatness that, prompted by his wonderful sympathy for everybody, he brought out the truths from the hidden Vedas and threw them broadcast all over the world. His was a protest and a challenge to the ritualism of the Brahmins. In his religion there is no caste, caste



is simply a social institution. "To my mind the great point about the teaching of Buddha is his insistence on applying religion to life." (Radhakrishnan). He only warned his followers not to waste time in vain intellectual speculation, but to help the evolution of life by being good and doing good to others. As Max Muller has to concede: "The most important element of the Buddhist reform has always been its social and moral code, not its metaphysical theories. That moral code, taken by itself is one of the most perfect which the world has ever known. On this point all testimonies from hostile and from friendly quarters agree." Gautama knew the futility of argument and metaphysical discourse—the detailed discussions in the Pali books are largely later interpolations in favour of some favourite theory—and he taught his followers in the simplest possible way. He brought them to know Truth by means of direct, intuitive experience and Enlightenment. Certainly his knowledge was not limited to his teaching, but caution prompted by great wisdom made him hesitant to divulge conceptions which if misunderstood might be disastrous.

A living and active religion and culture is great for the men it makes. It is man-making religion and man-making education all round that we want but not any astute palliatives,

evasions and apologies for that. We have, comparatively speaking, only few such real men. The mark of a truly living nation is that it produces great men in every sphere of life. Judged by this standard India is alive; for in every century it has produced spiritual geniuses, not to speak of leading men in secular fields. The modern age has witnessed in India the vigorous creative life of Vedic culture in the advent of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, Rabindra and Aurovindo, Gandhi and Rammohan. But it must truly be admitted that for the last one thousand years the Buddhist world has not produced a great man of world-renown as it used to do before. So Buddhism must again be reconciled to, and closely acquainted with, its Holy Mother, the Universal Samatana-dharma, so that it may again become a creative, dynamic, living, civilising power; for Buddhism is the very salt of India and the whole earth.

We want for India and Ceylon the bright sun of Vedanta-intellectuality joined with the heart of the Compassionate One, the wonderful combination of thought and feeling, wisdom and love, so that we may avoid imminent atrophy and fossilisation. In this age of scientific thought and mutual exchange of ideas among peoples, there is no place for static and dogmatic conceptions of religion.

# MEDITATIONS ON SELF-DISCIPLINE

*By Anilbaran Ray*

[Mr. Anilbaran Ray is a Sadhaka of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. In these meditations he sheds much light on several difficult problems of spiritual life.]

## I

**W**E must not give any more indulgence to our lower nature ; every time we yield to a lower impulse, we make it more difficult for us to conquer it ; every lower suggestion that we reject leads us a step forward. We have a great and difficult task to achieve, we must not increase our difficulties by carelessness or slackness of our will.

In our Sadhana every moment we either gain something or lose something. Every lower movement, however small, insignificant or plausible, that we indulge in takes us backward and gives a hold, a footing in us to the ever-watchful hostile forces. Even if we do not go lower and remain where we are, that is a loss of time and opportunity, because simply by keeping up our aspiration and silent will for transformation, we can make steady progress every moment of our life.

Every victory that we achieve over our lower nature helps us to know and realise the truth of our being, for in our true nature we are the masters and not the slaves of nature. Every temptation, however small, that we successfully resist strengthens our will, clears our intelligence, gives us true and genuine joy. Circumstances are always coming up where we can do or achieve something in the matter of our own transformation. We must always keep ourselves in close and intimate touch with the Divine Mother, so that every moment and with the help of every circumstance

that we meet, we can take a step forward towards divine life.

## II

One who has not controlled his own self and has not conquered his own defects, cannot expect to conquer and control the forces of the world. It is by practising self-conquest that we learn how to conquer the world.

As long as we have not removed our imperfections and transformed our instruments, our work in the world is bound to be full of mistakes and failures. The intuitions we receive from above will be confused by the wanderings of our mind, the impulses we receive from Thy Will, Mother, will be distorted by our egoistic desires and attachments, and though Thy divine force descends into us, through our own obstruction and rigidity it may lead to disasters instead of victory. So we must not meddle with the affairs of the world until by practice and discipline we have made ourselves free, pure and plastic instruments of the divine Will ; we should confine ourselves only to such work, Mother, under Thy direct guidance and control as will serve to mould and transform ourselves.

Before we venture to work upon the world, we have plenty of work and more to do within ourselves. We can easily recognise the false and lower movements in us and can constantly invoke Thy will and force and light, Mother, in order to correct and transform them. It is thus that we can

practise our union with Thee and steadily turn ourselves into perfect instruments in Thy hands, for the victorious performance of Thy will in the world. It is by practising self-conquest under Thy help and guidance that we learn how to conquer the world.

### III

We are the real masters of our nature and the more we realise this truth, the more the lower movements cease in us giving place to the higher.

Nature binds us in her meshes only because we allow ourselves to be bound. We take interest in the lower movements of nature, so they go on indefinitely. The more we yield to her promptings, the more inextricably she lays her hold upon us and uses us as her bond-slaves. But the moment we take a strong attitude, nature begins to throw away her mask and accept us as her master.

There is no temptation nature can bring before us, that we cannot resist by a strong will ; there is no pain or sorrow which we cannot bear ; there is no disturbance in which we cannot keep ourselves calm ; there is no situation, however bad or hopeless, out of which we cannot raise ourselves by a strong determination. Infinite and indomitable strength is in our Self, we have only to realise it and nature will cease to trouble us and will yield to us her richest treasures.

We take refuge in Thee, Mother, so that we may know our true Self and realise our true strength. The more we devote ourselves to Thee, the more we find Thee to be our own higher Self, we get strength from Thy strength, life from Thy life. The

moment of our complete identification with Thee, Mother, will be the moment of our highest conquest and self-realisation.

### IV

It is by obedience to Thee, Mother, that we hope to discipline our lower nature. By resolving to obey Thee instead of our desires and attachments, we really start on the path to a higher divine life.

Desires and passions hold a tyrannical sway over us and it seems well—nigh impossible to subdue or control them by our unaided will. But the consciousness that we are obeying Thee, Mother, gives us great strength, and we can easily conquer them supported by Thy will and Thy force. We must constantly seek to know Thy will and obey it—there is no other way of getting out of our bondage.

A forced obedience, an obedience from hope of gain or reward or from fear of loss or punishment is of little use. We must consciously and willingly offer our obedience to Thee, knowing Thee to be our higher Self, and with the faith that only by obedience to Thee we shall rise to the divine life. And our obedience must be enthusiastic and joyful,—an expression of our love and devotion to Thee as the Divine Mother. By a free and willing and joyful obedience to Thee, Mother, a harmony will be gradually established between Thy will and ours, all our desires and passions will be controlled and vanquished, no impulse will rise in us unless it be directly from Thee, and thus we shall steadily grow into Thy own Self and our obedience will be ultimately merged in a blissful harmony and identification with Thee.

# REASON AND INTUITION IN VEDANTA

By P. Nagaraja Rao, B.A. (Hons.)

[Mr. P. Nagaraja Rao is a research scholar in the Philosophy Department of the Madras University. Many a critic has denied the status of philosophy to Indian thought because it includes revelation as an instrument of knowledge. Mr. Rao's article is a brief, yet bold and convincing answer to the criticism.]

**A** COMMON charge levelled against Vedanta in particular and against Indian philosophy in general is that they are purely based on revealed scripture. No doubt scripture, (Sruti) is the final authority in matters concerning the "spirit." All other instruments of knowledge (Pramanas), such as inference, perception, etc., are subordinated to the explication and substantiation of scripture. Such an advocacy of scripture and its unimpeachable authority does not sound as a truly philosophical attitude. "The authoritarianism of Indian philosophy and Vedanta in particular is unphilosophical only on the face of it."\* There is abundant place for the exercise of reason (Upapatti) in the art of interpreting the scripture.

Scripture after all is a cluster of words. Words have their own import. The import of scripture is determined by our capacity to interpret. Vedanta does not accept the whole scripture as authoritative. Only the purportful part is taken into consideration. The Indian theory of scriptural interpretation is governed by six determinative marks of purport (Lingas of Tatparya Nirnaya). They are:—1. The initial passage (Upakrama) ; 2. the concluding passage (Upasamhara) ; 3. repetition

(Abhyasa) ; 4. Novelty (Aparva) ; 5. Fruitfulness or glorification by eulogistic passages and condemnation by deprecatory passages (Arthavada) ; 6. Reasoning (Upapatti). Even though the application of reason is only one of the determinative marks of purport, still it is "*reason*" that has to judge which is the "initial passage" and which the "concluding passage." It is "*reason*" that has to test which is "valid repetition" and which is "eulogistic". The charge that Vedanta is unphilosophical on the face of it proves to be a theory of the first look and not a product of mature thought.

Theistic schools of Indian philosophy, especially the Nyaya school, has made elaborate attempts to prove the existence of God with the help of inference. Students of philosophic thought may with profit refer to the incontestable proofs adduced by Udayana, the prince of Indian logicians, in his "*Nyaya Kusumanjali*," (fifth Sthabaka) for the existence of God. The proofs adduced by many a modern Gifford Lecturer for the existence of God pales into insignificance before Udayana's remorseless and unassailable logic.

We shall, however, confine our attention here to the application of reason to Advaita metaphysics only. The genius of Sankarite Advaitism lies in its critical examination of the categories of knowledge. They have

\* Refer to S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri's introduction to Bhamati T. P. H. publication.

scrupulously examined the telescope before turning it on the sky. The "Dialectic literature" in Advaita has proved to the hilt the unintelligibility of most categories of knowledge such as substance, quality, action, relation, causation, time and space. We should not forget to note that the Advaitin only denies ultimate reality to them. He grants their factuality and their relative reality. Thus through his sheer logical acumen he arrives at a "secondless reality" (Advitiya) and at the indeterminable nature (Anirvachaniya) of the phenomenal world.

His Brahman is the sole reality. It is Knowledge, Bliss and Existence. If it becomes an object of knowledge it loses its selfhood. It is self-manifest (Svaparakasa). But for its luminosity the whole world would be blind. It is non-relational. All relational knowledge is finite and it is only an appearance of the real. Thought can only point to this Brahman, it cannot have a grasp of it. The function of reason here is negative. Thought and reason tell us what the Brahman is not. It is a mistake that most upholders of the "coherence theory" in the West should think that "reason is constitutive of Truth." The invincible metaphysician, Sankara, recognises that he has no right to vary the game and he plays it according to the rules of logic. As a strict metaphysician he is pledged to truth and seeks it at all cost. His mind is not encumbered with religious prejudices or moral vagaries. He makes reason test everything, though he knows that it cannot build. "We discover by intuition but we prove by logic. Explanation is only an adventure of the mind." The vociferations of a hundred Srutis cannot establish what is

opposed to reason. Through the negative aid of logic and the positive flame of intuition Sankara arrives at the "Chidrupa Brahman." Logic after all proves its own imperfection and ineffectiveness. The failure of many an intellectual rationalist in the West is not their failure as the failure of intellect in general to grasp a truth which is proved on our pulse.

This Brahman can be intuited by constant meditation and concentration. Adherence to scripture-ordained duties is only an accessory to that final realisation, "Akhandartha Jnana"—the last psychosis. This is realisation perceptual and indeterminate. It is not the same as the cognition of a new-born baby. The cognition of the child is infra-rational. As it grows old the child's cognition gets relational.

The cognition of Brahman-realisation is final, it is trans-relational and has its own certitude, and it never again returns to its relational level. The immediacy of the cognition and the non-attributive nature are the only two characteristic features common between the new-born child's cognition and Brahman cognition. Let me conclude: "Maunavyakhyaprakata parabrahmatattvam—" the truth of Brahman is revealed by the commentary of silence. "Gurostu maunam vayakhyanam sisyaistu chinna-samsayah." Indian scripture gives cases of teachers who dispel the doubts of pupils by assuming an attitude of silence on the question of the ultimate.

As F. H. Bradley remarks: "Such a scepticism, I would add, if not the best issue, may serve at least as a deliverance from oppressions. For it may free us on every side from the

tyranny of intellectual prejudices, and in our own living concerns, from the superstitious idolatry of abstract consistency. For such a scepticism, all our truths without exception are

mere working ideas." "Outside of spirit, there is not, and there cannot be, any reality, and, the more that anything is spiritual, so much the more is it veritably real."

## INDIA'S MESSAGE IN STONE

*By Prof. K. S. Srikantan, M.A.*

[Mr. Srikantan is the Professor of History and Economics in the Madura College. He is a well-known author and journalist. In the following article he gives a simple exposition of the ideals that have actuated the sculptors of India, and shows how the handiwork of the master craftsmen of India truly reflect the spiritual genius of her culture.]

THE soul of India is still in her temples. Who can forget the sun-kissing towers and Sikharas of her magnificent temples which greet the pilgrims from a distance. Verily, India is a land of the Gopuras and Vimanas. To realise the insignificance of man and the omnipotence of God, one has only to stand before one of these mighty towers and look up at their massive structure with a profusion of images and carvings. Every image in the tower has a message to give; unfortunately our interest in these are so little that few of us care to understand what these silent speakers have to say.

The city of Madura affords ample opportunities for research to a keen student of Indian sculpture. It is justly known as the Athens of South India and as such it is attracting thousands of pilgrims every year. "Even to-day," says Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswami, "it is far easier to lecture to an ordinary European audience on Indian art and find some understanding, than it is to secure this understanding from an Indian audience." In fact the glory of Madura Temple is better known to the tourists than to the students of any of India's

educational institutions. It is indeed unfortunate that the educated young men of India should pay so little attention to the glories of Indian art. The Western savants of Indian culture are surprised to note the ignorance of our students about the architecture and iconography of their own temples. The reason for this is not far to seek. In the words of Havell, "in modern times, the influence of Western education, with its purely commercial ideals, has been even more depressing to Indian art than the iconoclasm of Aurangzib. Educated India, under British rule, while affecting to exchange its own culture for that of the West, has remained entirely aloof from those vital movements in British Art and Craft which in the last half century have derived so much impetus from the study and exhibition of oriental art. Western methods of education have opened a rift between the artistic castes and the 'educated' such as never existed at any previous time in Indian History. The remedy lies not in making the Indian artists more literate in the European sense, nor in teaching them anatomy, perspective and model drawing but in making the literates, edu-

cators and educated, conscious of the deficiencies of their own education which render them unable to appreciate the artistic wealth lying at their doors."

We have still to realise that the Indian coins and temple-buildings have not only an aesthetic but also a historical value. Many a knotty problem in Indian History can easily be solved if Indian art and sculpture were studied with a historical bias. Art always has been a mirror of history, and to those who approach her with care and respect, she yields information that they could never have dreamt of. As it is, there are several gaps in Indian History on account of lack of literary and archaeological materials. There was, however, hardly a century when the Indian artist was quiet. It is therefore easy to bridge some of these dark gulfs of our history, if only our students take a little more interest in the historical interpretation of Indian architecture and sculpture.

The recent excavations in Harappa and Mohenjo Daro have carried back the history of Indian art to the beginning of the Chalcolithic period (3,000 B.C.). The old controversy whether image worship existed in the Vedic period or not is almost settled ; for the history of Hindu Iconography can now be carried back to even pre-Vedic period. It is art that is now establishing the contact of the Hindus with the dwellers on the far off Islands. The influence of her art can clearly be traced not only in Byzantine art, but in the Gothic Cathedrals of the Middle Ages and also in the temples of Java and Bali Islands.

To students of Indian history, the interest is not merely in the figures themselves, but in the cultural synthe-

sis which most of the figures reveal. An understanding of Indian art for purposes of interpreting her history, requires a knowledge of the motives that prompted that workmen. Indian art is so closely connected with her history and religion that several scholars have been led altogether to strange conclusions on account of their incapacity to understand the religious background of Indian Iconography. Thus V. A. Smith says in his article on the subject in the *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. 2 : "After 300 A.D., Indian sculpture, properly so called, hardly deserves to be reckoned as an art. The figures, both of men and animals, became stiff and formal and the idea of power is clumsily expressed by the multiplication of members. The many-headed, many-armed gods and goddesses, whose images crowd the walls and roofs of medieval temples, have no pretensions to beauty and are frequently hideous and grotesque."

V. A. Smith here is condemning what he is unable to understand. Indian sculptors never erected a statue for mere enjoyment. It was never based upon sensual worship like Hellenic art. The artists always regarded Nature as a manifestation of one great Universal Law. They always sought for,

Tongues in trees, books in the  
running brooks,

Sermons in stones and God in  
everything.

The sculptors never attempted to be realistic although, if they wanted, they could. Except in Gandhara, nowhere are the creations true to nature. In the words of Matsya Purana "to worship Gods and to sing their praise is the best of Karma Yoga and it will

bring salvation to men." They were prohibited from creating a human likeness on stone. It was considered as a prostitution of art. In the words of Sukracharya, the author of *Sukra Niti*, "The images of Gods yield happiness to men and lead to heaven; but those of men lead away from heaven and yield grief."

In Bharhurl and Sanchi we have the figures of Pasenadi and Ajata Satru, in Madura we have the figures of the rulers of the Nayak dynasty. But they occupy a very subordinate place. Sculpture in India has been throughout religious. Its aim has been superhuman perfection of character and equanimity. With such aims, the artists could have had nothing to do with facial expression in the ordinary sense of the term; nay, on the other hand, the more human in expression, the less does Hindu sculpture approach its own perfection. Only qualities like graciousness, nobility and peace, which involve in their perfection a superhuman balance of intellect and emotion can be expressed in our images. Action without attachment is the core of Indian philosophy. The Indian icons clearly exhibit this motive. To them, we can apply the statement of Leonardo da Vinci: "That drawing is best which by its action best expresses the passion that animates the figure." The images are wonderfully expressive. One cannot but be struck with the breathless eagerness and rapturous surprise of the boy-god Sundaramoorthy in the Madura temple. Who can resist admiring the serenity and unshaken peace exhibited in the face of Dakshinamoorthi? The aim of Indian art is suggestion and not imitation.

The sculptors, being anxious to impress the worshippers with the superhuman nature of the God they worshipped, attached some symbols to signify His superiority. If a man has two arms, naturally a god like Brahma or Vishnu must have four or more arms. In representing the gods, the sculptor also took into consideration the tradition behind them. In making the image of Vishnu the symbols of Sankha (conch), Chakra (disc), Gada (club) and Padma (lotus) were always added. The capacity of the sculptor was judged by the spirit of meditation the image infused in the heart of the on-looker. The chief characteristic of an image is its power of helping forward contemplation and Yoga. The human maker of images should therefore be himself meditative. To Indian sculptor proportion was not so important as Dhyana and Yoga. While Greek images are graceful, and Egyptian ones natural, it is only Indian images which can claim to be contemplative. The importance of this aspect of Indian sculpture would be clear if one realised the qualifications necessary for this profession. Foucher, in his *Iconographie Buddhique* writes, "The sculptor must meditate on the emptiness of (*Shunyata*) or non-existence of all things, for by the fire of the idea of the abyss, it is said there are destroyed beyond recovery, the five factors of ego-consciousness. Then only should he invoke the desired Divinity by the utterance of the appropriate seed-word (*Bija*) and should identify himself completely with the divinity to be represented. Then, finally, on pronouncing the *Dhyana Mantra*, in which the attributes are defined, the Divinity appears visibly like a reflection or 'as



in a dream,' and this brilliant image is the artist's model. The artist in brief was enjoined to become one with Divinity (Devo bhootva devam yajet).

Besides being a practical philosopher, the sculptor was also expected to be proficient in several other sister arts. In the Vishnu Dharmottara, we are told that he who does not know properly the rules of Chitra (painting) can by no means be able to draw the characteristics of images (Pratimalakshana). Again without a knowledge of the science of dancing, the rules of painting are very difficult to be understood. Moreover, the science of dancing is difficult to be understood by one who is not acquainted with music. Lastly without singing, music cannot be understood.

The Silpasashtra lays down several interesting rules regarding the making of an image. To them several others have been added by later works like Sukraniti, Brahatsamhita and Maya Sastra. According to Sukra "one should not construct an image that has eyes directed upwards, downwards or closed, nor should design one that has vehement eyes, but eyes bespeaking satisfaction." Again Varahamihira in his Brahatsamhita says, "If the image has excess in its arms, the sculptor will suffer from the fear of the king; if it is less, ill fate will befall him; if it is thin, he will suffer from loss of money. If the image has a wound from the fall of weapons, it indicates the death of the maker. If it inclines to the left, it bespeaks of the death of his wife, and if to the right, death of his own self. If its eyes are directed upwards, it makes him blind, if the eyes are cast downwards, it will bring evil

thought to him." The technique of an icon was of national importance. The author of the Pratimalakshana observes, "If the image is deficient in length, there would be famine and national breakage."

If Indian sculptors cared, they could easily excel the Greeks in imitating the anatomical proportions of the body. The bronze figure of a dancing girl recently discovered in Mohanjo Daro shows a sense of naturalism of modelling, rare even among the Greeks. It is particularly conspicuous in the treatment of the back and legs and in the expression of general alertness, force and refinement. Several images in the temple of Sri Meenakshi and Madana Gopala Swami in Madura, point to the perfection of Indian sculptors in representing human life. We cannot but refer in this connection to the famous Kambattadi Mantapam in front of God Sundareswara. The carving on the pillars, to say the least, is superb. Each pillar has a story to tell. The workmanship is so fine and the chiselling so delicate that one is lost in silent admiration. Particularly noteworthy among these figures is a bas-relief on the south western pillar representing Ravana in penance with the sacred Mount Kailasa on his back. The execution is as grand as the conception is noble. Equally fascinating is the pillar depicting the marriage of Sri Meenakshi with Lord Sundareswara. The serenity in the face of Brahma, the shyness and suppressed smile in the face of the bride and the affectionate expression in the face of the bridegroom cannot but captivate the attention of even a casual visitor. Indeed the message of India has been impressively translated in stone.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**Sri Ramakrishna and St. Francis of Assisi.** By *Sister Devamata*. *Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, Los Angeles County, California.* Page 88.

This little book is a comparative study of the lives and mission of the two great personalities whose names it bears. A look at the table of contents will give the readers an idea of its scope and features: Parallels in Method and Mission, Differences and Points of Unity, The Ramakrishna Mission and the Early Franciscan Brotherhood, St. Francis and the East, Contemporaneous Conditions, Their Message, Admonitions of St. Francis, Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. The picture that we get in these few pages is not one drawn by a mere historian or biographer but by a devotee who has rightly entered into the spirit of both without turning into a fanatic. One might not see eye to eye with the authoress in some points of comparison, still there is no gain-saying that her observations are largely true, and have fairly succeeded in taking away the odium that is unavoidable in such cases. The beautiful style of the Sister and the fervour of her heart have put an additional zest to the ennobling theme. The "admonitions" and the "teachings" have eternal values for all spiritual aspirants, whereas the parallelism in method and mission, though very brief and cursory, is interesting to those who are working in the same fields.

**The Chatussruti Bhashya of Sri Madhvacharya (Sanskrit) :** *Critically edited by B. N. Krishnamurti Sarma, M.A., Lecturer in Sanskrit, Annamalai University.* Pp. XXXII + 136. Price Rs. 2-8-0 or 6 sh.

The first four aphorisms of the Brahmasutras take us to the heart of the problem set before all philosophy and religion. Hence the numerous commentaries and expositions that crowd and cluster around the tiny text of the Sutras in a genealogical relation to it, rightly lay special emphasis on these four crucial aphorisms. Not long ago we had the pleasure of noticing in these columns another edition of this Chatussruti portion with Sankarabhashya, Bhamati and

up-to-date critical appurtenances by two eminent scholars and published by the Theosophical Society. We are glad to welcome in its wake another almost similar edition of the same four sutras with Madhvabhashya and three of its commentaries. The introduction and notes constitute the most distinguishing features in both the publications. They are really beneficial to the students of philosophy for the new light they shed on textual and allied matters. However, apart from the unity of topic and similarity in general appearance, one fact which has called to our mind the former publication is the jarring difference in the composition of the present introduction and notes. In the first they were strictly objective, thoroughly dispassionate and scientifically critical. In the work before us, on the other hand there is an express vindication of the supremacy of Madhvabhashya. To confront the three important Bhashyas and to assess their relative merits was an idea foreign to the first. But the edition under review shows a different spirit. The author of this introduction strays into disputable grounds and looks to Madhvacharya's laurels by instituting odious comparisons between the Bhashyas, specially their method, style and interpretation. The work, therefore, is apt to meet greater appreciation at the hands of the loyal adherents of Madhvasiddhanta than of scientific critics who view facts in strictly chronological perspective and whose judgments are not surrendered to authority. Nevertheless Mr. Sarma's endeavour to shed new light on several points of interest and his microscopic criticism merit appreciation even though one may not agree with them all. His understanding of texts of this realistic school in the spirit in which they were written, and his procedure in the orbit of the masters of the school in interpreting them strictly from within, are praiseworthy. We owe him the rescue of two valuable commentaries on the Bhashya which for the first time appear here in print. The work on the whole is an addition to Indian Philosophy, especially to the slender output of Madhva literature available in modern form.

**The Dhammapada : Text in Devanagari with English translation by Prof. N. K. Bhagawath, B.A.**

This brochure is a publication of the Buddha Society, Bombay, founded by the late Dr. A. L. Nair,—a very welcome addition for those who desire to possess in handy form this glorious scripture of the Buddhists. The Pali text in Devanagari serves a very useful purpose.

**The Nature of Mysticism : By C. Jinarajadasa (Vice-President of the Theosophical Society 1921-1928). Published by the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, 2nd Edition.**

This is a small book of eighty pages, neatly printed and containing a lucid and striking presentation of a difficult subject. Many writers on mysticism have felt it almost impossible to define it. One of them has stated, "It is one of those things which are most nearly understood through, 'Those intuitions, grasps of guess

Which pull the more into the less,

Making the finite comprehend infinity.'

*Maeterlinck*

Mr. Jinarajadasa in his book observes, "So universal is the mystic life, so all-inclusive of life's processes, that it is not easy to say what exactly constitutes mysticism," and later on "Mysticism is a life of the spirit which cannot be held within the boundaries of the religions." He has there-

fore approached the subject with reference to the modes of mystics generally and the main types of mysticism. As introductory to his main theme, he has classified men as belonging to three types, Practical Scientific and Mystic. The chief characteristic of the mystic has been put into the finely condensed style characteristic of the author, as follows, "The outer world is continually transmuting itself into an inner world of feeling ; he lives for that inner world and his values to life in the outer world are derived from it." The life and conduct of some mystics are a puzzle to many people. The statement quoted above and the elaboration thereof in subsequent pages of the book are bound to throw considerable light on the ways of mystics and the life of mysticism.

Having described the chief characteristic of the mystics, the author proceeds to take up six main types of mysticism—mysticism of grace, mysticism of love, pantheistic mysticism, nature mysticism, sacramental mysticism and theosophical mysticism. Each of these has been considered under four heads, the theme, the method, the obstacle and the ideal. Without undue elaboration and within a brief compass the author has done his best to convey right knowledge and provide ample food for thought to those who are eager to learn something of the inwardness of mysticism and the ways of the mystics.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Sri Ramakrishna Centenary in Chicago

A celebration commemorating the Centenary of the birth of Sri Ramakrishna was held in Chicago on March 20, 21, and 22, by the friends and followers of the Vedanta Society, under the leadership of Swami Gnaneswarananda. The festivities opened with a banquet in the beautiful Grand Ball Room of the Medinah Club in downtown Chicago, where more than two hundred guests assembled. The occasion was blessed and honoured by the presence of Swami Paramananda of Boston, Swami Vividishananda of Washington, D.C., Swami Nikhilananda of New York, and Swami Akhilananda of Providence, R. I.

For this celebration were received a message from Swami Akhandananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Belur, offering his peace and blessings; a greeting by cable from Mahatma Gandhi; a poem dedicated to Sri Ramakrishna from Rabindranath Tagore ; and a letter from Romain Rolland of France expressing his hope that the present chaotic condition of the nations of the world is the darkness before the dawn of a new era of universal brotherhood. Mr. Rolland is convinced that in the character of the saint of Dakshineswar is found a composite of the qualities and ideals needed to unite the peoples of the earth, without merging

them or moulding them into the same pattern. These communications were read by Swami Gnaneswarananda.

On the program of the evening was an internationally known speaker, Dr. Preston Bradley, pastor of the Peoples Church, Chicago. Dr. Bradley militantly supports the modern age, not as it is, but as he believes it should and can be, spiritualized. He is a man whose heart and soul is dedicated to obtaining the greatest good for the greatest number. Dr. George L. Scherger of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, a well-known scholar and historian, drew interesting and instructive analogies between the philosophy of ancient Greece and that of ancient India. Each of the visiting Swamis spoke briefly on different phases of the life and teachings of the great Master.

On the evening of March 21, at the Masonic Temple, some of the local students presented a very unusual performance, consisting of a concert of Hindu sacred music in Bengali and Hindustani languages, Hindu romantic and temple dances and a marionette production. All the players were attired in authentic costumes, and the musicians sitting on the floor of the dais, with pillows scattered about, gave to the whole scene an entirely oriental aspect. On the centre wall of the platform hung a garlanded picture of Sri Ramakrishna.

The marionette theatre, designed and assembled by the students, portrayed the "Descent of Ganga" in three acts. The village Kathak seated on the stage recited the story of Shiva and Parvati. The puppets were realistic from every standpoint, and seemed to be capable of all the emotions known to human life. Each episode was accompanied by the proper scenery, painted by the students from original portraits. Behind the curtain trained voices repeated the dialogues between the mythical characters. Several dramatic incidents took place during the course of the play, as for instance, a thundering noise and a terrible blaze that reduced Madan to ashes. The last scene was a picture of Sri Ramakrishna and an epilogue comparing this God-man with the cleansing and purifying waters of the Holy Ganges.

The celebration concluded on Sunday, March 22, with a symposium held at the

Masonic Temple where the Society holds its regular meetings. Swami Paramananda Swami Vividishananda, Swami Akhilananda and Swami Nikhilananda, presented by Swami Gnaneswarananda, spoke eloquently upon the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna as the solution for the ever-growing unrest and turmoil of modern society. Swami Vividishananda gave an illustrated lecture of lantern slides showing familiar scenes in the life of the Master and his intimate disciples.

Much publicity has been given this occasion by articles and pictures published in the leading Chicago newspapers, and the attendance at each function was beyond all expectations. On Sunday, especially, scores had to go away for lack of accommodation.

In the month of February the book "Ramakrishna the Man and the Power," so admirably written by Swami Gnaneswarananda was off the press. No doubt this little volume influenced to a great extent the widespread interest in the formal celebration.

#### **Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Celebrations in C. P. & Berar**

The Birth Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna is being celebrated with remarkable success in almost all District towns, Tahsil places and a number of villages of C. P. & Berar. People of different communities have been sincerely joining hands everywhere.

*Nagpur*: The holy function, amidst Bhajans, was inaugurated at the Nagpur Ramakrishna Mission when His Holiness Sri Shankaracharya of Karvir Peeth, Dr. Kurtakoti read out the "Peace Message" of Swami Akhandanandaji Maharaj, the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. From February 24th to March 15th, the celebrations went on with great eclat. Altogether 50,000 people of all creeds gathered to pay homage to the great Master. Bhagwathbhakta Tukdoji Maharaj, Vinayak Maharaj Masurkar, Mrs. Andharey, Mahadeo Bowa, and Pandit Telang Shastri delivered very inspiring Bhajans, Pravachans and Kirtans dealing with the invaluable contributions of the Saints of India and their catholic religious principles.

The most interesting and instructive feature of the celebration was the "Conven-

tion of Religions" held from March 1st to 3rd, under the presidency of His Holiness Jagatguru Sri Shankaracharya of Karvir Peeth, Dr. Kurtakoti, M.A., Ph.D. In the Convention, Hinduism by Prof. G. R. Malkani of Amalner; Islam by Moulana L.A. Hydari of Lucknow; Buddhism by Dr. C. D. Deshmukh, Nagpur; Jainism by Prof. Hiralal Jain of Amraoti; Sikhism by Prof. Teja Singh of Amritsar; Christianity by Rev. Gardiner of Nagpur; Vaishnavism by Kumudbandhu Sen of Puri; Bahaism by Mrs. Sirin K. Fouzdar of Bombay; Theosophy by Mr. W. L. Chiplunkar of Akola and Sri Ramakrishna and Universal Religion by Swami Bhaskarashwarananda were impressively represented, whereby a very pleasant atmosphere of religious fellowship was created and felt by the audience of all creeds who crowded everyday in thousands.

Sri Shankaracharya in his Presidential Address referred to the significance of the Life of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna, his practical harmony of religions and beauties of Hindu Dharma. At the commencement of his inspiring address, the learned and liberal Shankaracharya gave out, in frank terms, his sincere appreciation of the works of the local Ramakrishna Ashram in particular and of the Ramakrishna Mission in general, with a remark that had he not been entrusted with the responsibilities of the Gadi of Shankaracharya, people would have seen him as one of the Sanyasins of the Ramakrishna Order, and although circumstances had kept him away, he always had taken himself as one of the monastic members of the Ramakrishna Mission and had been trying throughout his life, to carry out the message and work of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda.

A special meeting for ladies was also held when Mrs. Parvatibai Patwardhan of Amraoti presided and Mr. A. G. Sheorey, Mr. J. U. Bhalerao and Swami Bhaskarashwarananda spoke on "Place of Women in the Making of Indian Nation" and "Sri Ramakrishna and his Ideals. The last two addresses were delivered with the aid of magic lantern slides.

Special editorials and articles on the life and message of Sri Ramakrishna were published in the local and outside papers viz., *Swachhandra*, *Dharmarajya*, *Daily News*, *Hansa*, *Vishwodhar* and the *Maharashtra*.

The Nagpur Ramakrishna Mission, in commemoration of the centenary of the Great World Prophet, has published (1) a comprehensive Marathi life of Sri Ramakrishna complete in two parts; (2) a short Marathi Life of Sri Ramakrishna; (3) Sri Ramakrishna Vak-sudha which is a verbatim Marathi translation of the Bengali Sri Ramakrishna Upadesha by late Swami Brahmananda. There are three other memorial publications which are under preparation.

**Bhandara :** From 24th February to 2nd March, Bhandara wore a gala appearance with puja, procession, magic lantern demonstrations, kirtan, etc. Great enthusiasm was evinced by the public who thronged in thousands everyday to chant the holy name of Sri Ramakrishna and to receive his message. Mr. Dixit, Mrs. Andharey, Swami Bhaskarashwarananda, Dr. Patwardhan and Principal Pandharipande were among the important speakers. Daridra Narayan Seva was one special feature.

**Wardha :** Thanks to the special efforts of Dr. Londhe, the worthy Principal of the Wasudeo Arts College, the College Literary Society celebrated Sri Ramakrishna Centenary with great faith and devotion at Wardha. A meeting was held in the town hall with Rai Bahadur Chhotelal Varma, Deputy Commissioner in the Chair. Dr. Londhe gave a very nice and critical appreciation of the Prophet. Pandit Brijlal Surat also spoke on the significance of Ramakrishna's life. The President in his remarks specifically encouraged the idea of students to hold Jayantis and Anniversaries of such great saints.

Among the other important town in C.P. where celebrations were held may be mentioned Arvi, Chhindwara, Mohpa, Saugor, Drug, Jabulpore, and Bilaspore. In all these places besides Pooja and Bhajana, there were several largely attended meetings where distinguished speakers delivered lectures on Sri Ramakrishna and on subjects of general religious interest. In some places feeding of Daridra Narayanas also took place. In addition to the above-mentioned towns, the villages of Khappa, Khamla, Ambazari, Telankhedi and Somalwada also celebrated the Centenary with special puja, bhajana and lantern lectures.

## BERAR

*Amraoti* : From February 24th to March 14th Amraoti celebrated the Birth Centenary of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna. At the Brahma Vidya Mandir crowds gathered every evening to listen to the learned discourses. Mr. R. V. Dixit of Nagpur Ramakrishna Mission with the aid of magic lantern slides explained the life of Sri Ramakrishna and works of Ramakrishna Mission in India and abroad. Also renowned speakers like Rao Saheb G. S. Sardesai, a famous historian, Prof. Kolte Jain, Mr. Ramnathan, Rev. D'Souza, Rao Bahadur Brahma, Mrs. Pradhan, Dr. Londhe and Dr. Patwardhan spoke on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna as also on different religions with their bearings on varied problems of individual and national life.

**The Ramakrishna Math Charitable Dispensary, Mylapore, Madras,  
(Report for 1935)**

The dispensary came into existence in 1925 when Dr. B. Raghavendra Rao, Retired Civil Surgeon of Madras, offered his professional services and also undertook to bear the expenses that would be incurred for the work. Since then with the co-operation of some doctor friends and others interested in the work, the dispensary has developed into one of the important and popular centres of medical relief in the city. It is gratifying to note that several experienced and well-known doctors are taking a good deal of interest in the well-being of this charitable institution. The attending doctors are assisted by three monastic workers, a paid clerk and some friends. The institution had been working till 1933 in thatched sheds, and the accommodation was too insufficient for the crowd of patients that came for relief. In that year through the help of friends and supporters of our cause the Math was able to purchase the present premises. After the necessary repairs the new spacious building is being used for the dispensary.

It need hardly be said that the dispensary has been fulfilling a long-felt want of the poorer section of the locality. The enormous rise in the number of patients from about 5,109 in 1926 to 6,667 in the present year bears testimony to this fact.

*Needs of the dispensary* :—The work of the dispensary has increased by leaps and

bounds during the brief period of its existence. The number of patients and the workers attending on them has gone up considerably, and the necessity is being daily felt for putting the institution on a sound basis financially and securing the permanence of its work for the benefit of the poor. The following are some of its needs:—

(1) Besides the medicines we get free, we have to purchase a good deal of drugs, bandages, etc., for daily use. To meet their cost as well as to defray the expenses for maintaining three workers, the salary of the paid clerk, doctor's allowance, etc., we require a sum of at least Rs. 250 every month. (2) It is unfortunate that owing to the want of many modern appliances and outfits, the institution has often to deny adequate service to a number of poor people and cannot fully utilise the talents and experience of the doctors-in-charge. This want should be removed for the sake of rendering more efficient relief to such patients.

The authorities of the institution therefore appeal to the generous public to come forward with liberal contributions for fulfilling the immediate needs of the institution. Donors wishing to perpetuate the memory of their friends or relatives may do so by creating memorial endowments for the maintenance of the Charitable Dispensary. A tablet bearing the names of the persons whose memory is to be perpetuated will be fixed in a suitable part of the building. The institution's appeal goes in the name of suffering humanity and it is fervently hoped that it will evoke hearty response. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by Swami Amriteswarananda, President, the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Mylapore, Madras.

**Ramakrishna Mission, Barisal**

This institution has completed the twenty-fifth year of its useful existence. Its activities are three-fold, viz., educational, charitable and missionary. In the Students' Home attached to the centre there were 13 boys, of whom 8 were free, 4 concession holders and 1 paying. It tries to impart a true cultural, moral and spiritual training to the students who are under the

direct control and guidance of the monks of the Order. The centre maintains a Library and a Free Reading Room which are open to the public. During the year under report, temporary help or monthly aid was given to 236 persons ; 22 helpless patients were nursed in their homes ; and a few were treated with medicine and diet or were taken to the local hospital. The Home boys went for house to house collection in aid of Bankura Flood Relief Fund. Weekly religious classes were conducted and lectures were delivered by the Swamis under the auspices of other associations and public bodies in the town. The present need of the Ashrama is to construct a verandah to the Prayer Hall at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,500 for seating ladies on special occasions. Funds for the up-keep of at least 18 poor students and a gymnasium with the necessary apparatus are also necessary. The management hopes that the public support and sympathy will be forthcoming to meet these urgent demands.

Among the note-worthy events of the year are the completion of the Prayer Hall ; the visit of Swami Vignananandaji Maharaj, the Vice President of the Mission ; and the formation of a Committee to celebrate Sri Ramakrishna Centenary in Barisal and other places.

#### FAMINE & FLOOD : An Appeal

Swami Madhavananda, the Acting Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, has issued the following report and appeal :—

*Khulna Famine* : In our last report we have acquainted the public with the gravity of the situation due to famine in the Satkhira sub-division of the Khulna district. Men, women and children are starving by thousands. Over two-thirds of the population can barely manage to get a meal every other day. A small percentage is fortunate enough to have one meal a day. The rest have nothing to eat and have to fill their stomach with anything they can get. Naturally, cholera and other epidemics have broken out, with none to attend upon the sick. The earning members of most

families have deserted their dependants, being unable to stand the sight of misery that knows no redress. Women are in rags, which forces them to keep indoors, although they are starving. There is not an iota of exaggeration in this picture. Rather many ugly features have been omitted.

From our Gabura centre in Thana Shyamnagar we distributed on the 1st June 27 mds. 24 srs. of rice to 552 recipients belonging to 14 villages, and on the 9th June 43 mds. 26 srs. of rice to 873 recipients belonging to 16 villages. In addition to this 9 mds. 38 srs. of rice were distributed as temporary aid.

*Bankura Famine* : Bankura district is also badly affected by famine. Reports of the piteous condition of its inhabitants have been frequently reaching us. We have therefore decided to start relief work in the Kotalpur Thana of that district with the small amount of money at our disposal, relying on the sympathy of the public. Details of the work will be published in due course.

*Arakan Flood* : At Cheduba, a small island on the Arakan coast of Burma, a centre has been started under the auspices of our Rangoon branch for the relief of the flood-stricken people of the Kyankpyu district. The first distribution of food-stuffs have already been made. Extreme difficulty of communication in this monsoon season has delayed our receiving the report in time.

Considering the appalling extensivity of the distress, we have been able to touch only a fringe of it. The relief must be continued, and for this we need the hearty co-operation of the large-hearted public. We earnestly hope that in the coming month the response to our appeal will be more encouraging, so that we may serve these thousands of hungry Narayanas with at least a few mouthfuls of food, and remove their nakedness in howsoever imperfect a way. All contributions will be gratefully accepted and acknowledged at the following address :—The President, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, Dist. Howrah.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

पश्य भूतानि दुःखेन व्यतिष्ठितानि सर्वशः ।  
उत्तमाधममध्यानि तेषु तेष्विह कर्मसु ॥  
आत्मापिचायं न मम सर्वा वा पृथिवी मम ।  
यथा मम तथान्येषामिति मत्वा न मे व्यथा ।  
एतां बुद्धिमहं प्राप्य न प्रहृष्ये न च व्यथे ॥  
यथा काष्ठं च काष्ठं च समेयातां महोदधौ  
समेत्य च व्यपेयातां तद्वद्भूतसमागमः ॥  
┌ सुखस्यानन्तरं दुःखं दुःखस्यानन्तरं सुखम्  
सुखदुःखे मनुष्याणां चक्रवत् परिवर्ततः ॥  
० सुखात्त्वं दुःखमापन्नः पुनरापत्यते सुखम् ।  
न नित्यं लभते दुःखं न नित्यं लभते सुखम् ॥

Behold, here in this world creatures of all grades, highest, lowest and middling, engaged in their respective works, are consumed by misery in every way. But to me there is no pain because I reflect that this very self does not belong to me or that the entire globe is mine, and that just as it is mine it does belong to others too. Just as two floats wafted on the heaving waters of the sea would join together and subsequently separate, so also all beings meet and part. Misery dogs the heels of happiness and happiness follows a spell of misery. Man's happiness and misery ever turns like a wheel. From a happy state you have fallen to a miserable one ; once again happiness shall be yours ; neither happiness nor misery is eternal.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Ch. 173, verses 14, 15, 16, 20 & 21.



## THE PLACE OF CASTE IN MODERN HINDUISM

[Caste is not to be identified with the essence of Hinduism. The controversy referred to below is the result of such wrong identification. In the following paragraphs we present the conflicting views on caste and make an attempt to state its proper relation to Hinduism.]

### I

**S**TUDIES in contrasts are often very interesting and instructive, if not for anything else, at least for the chances they give for acquainting oneself with the divergent points of view. The caste system, the hoary social system of India, both idealised and condemned by different sections of Indian opinion, has recently been the subject for comment and reflection for two well-known persons representing divergent and conflicting schools of thought. We shall give below extracts from the writings of both these distinguished personages, and express our own thoughts in the end.

We shall first state in substance the views on caste expressed by Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri in an article entitled 'Caste system in the light of modern thought,' appearing in the May and June issues of the Hindu Mind. According to Mr. Sastri both Varna and Ashrama are essential features of the Hindu Dharma, and the new-born prejudice which accepts the second while rejecting the first is only a sign of "ignorance and selfishness and childish impatience of discipline." Dharma is eternal and is graduated according to birth. That does not, however, connote any inferiority or superiority but implies only diversities of action along with the oneness of the soul. The Hindu scriptures maintain that all who claim human status must possess tenderness to all human beings, patience, absence of

jealousy and hate, purity, serenity, dispassion and auspiciousness of thought, word and deed.

Mr. Sastri remarks, "According to the Hindu idea—and that is which is entitled to the greatest weight when dealing with a Hindu institution—the caste system has a divine origin and sanction. The Purusha Sukta states this in the clearest terms. It has a divine origin, a sociological basis and an economic and industrial manifestation. The chief thing about it is that it is the social means to attain a spiritual end. It is a unique attempt in the history of humanity to organise society on the basis of co-operative and non-competitive mutual service towards a definite spiritual aim, viz., personal salvation through a Dharmic social life. Inter-dining and inter-marriage were prohibited in the interests of the richness of diversity leading through harmony to unity. Inter-dining and inter-marriage have not prevented social hatreds within a nation or racial hatreds between nations in Europe. The Indian attempt was to secure unity by attending to the higher centres of life and providing for inter-action and inter-thought and inter-worship."

One may ask in this connection why then do the Sanatanists support untouchability and un-approachability, and deny Harijans the right of temple-entry?

Mr. Sastri continues to state that the economic basis of the caste

system is to replace competition by co-ordination, the struggle for existence by the struggle for the life of others, the social chaos by the social cosmos. Until the inroad of Western civilisation, it gave India economic self-sufficiency and endowed the Indian craftsmen with great hereditary aptitude.

The caste system has never been opposed to unity though nowadays those who foster "communal hatreds from other motives try to fasten on it the defects of their evil hearts." "Where is the incompatibility between a territorial political basis of social life and its communal religious basis? The two aspects of the national consciousness have no more antagonism than the love of the larger group known as the joint family and the love of husband and wife are antagonistic to each other." The caste system is in harmony with true democracy, for it recognises the equality of all as children of God and lifts up the lower to the level of the higher by the hand of love in place of postulating an equality which does not exist. It has not been opposed to patriotism; for the Rajputs have been the most patriotic of Indian communities and among the most loyal of Dharma's followers.

But the question will be raised whether the Rajputs ever subordinated their clannishness and family pride to the larger interests of the country?

Various foreign religions like Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam from without, and protestant movements like Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society, the Deva Samaj, and the Theistic Endeavour Society from within have

tried to shatter the caste system but failed. It has Hinduised and civilised the aborigines without enslaving or exterminating them. In regard to greater India, it allowed foreign travel to ascetics, but others who went were to re-attain purity after returning home. Because the cosmopolitanism and the nomadic life of the detached sojourner might weaken the instinctive sense of the sanctity of social bonds, it does not encourage the fetish of foreign travel without any safe-guard to preserve our distinctive social purity and spiritual culture. If the entire social order could be transplanted abroad, there is no objection in foreign travel. The writer very much appreciates the wisdom of this arrangement and asks others to ponder over it.

The most melancholy feature about modern caste system is the absurd multiplication of sub-sects and sub-castes. This is as opposed to the original social scheme as to the best interests of efficiency and progress. "The ideal caste system turns upon three pivots none of which can be displaced without utter ruin to the whole, viz., the regulation of daily life, the preservation of caste Dharma and the observance of Shastric injunctions as to marital choice and marital duty. Especially important is the place of womanhood in the caste system. "When the women of India leave the sanctuary of the home and get drunk with the wines of the new irreverent knowledge and the new indiscriminate freedom, then will begin the decline and fall of India and not till then."

Many will be tempted to ask whether we are now at the meridian of our glory and greatness?

As regards the place for the reclamation of the fallen in the caste system, purificatory ceremonies are prescribed for certain defections from purity but not for all. "No society can exist in a state of purity without such rules of inclusion and exclusion. If one born in another faith or converted to another faith from Hinduism wants the Hindu faith, he can have it but he cannot enter the Hindu caste system. The caste system is an institution for preserving racial purity, to enable re-incarnating souls of a certain level of spiritual attainment to find fitting embodiment, and hence it cannot allow ingress into it of other elements merely because outsiders or converts believe in the truths of Hinduism."

A host of questions are likely to arise in one's mind at this. How is this ideal different from pure racialism? Will not Hinduism thereby be reduced to an ethnic religion and denied the position of a universal religion? If caste is of divine origin, how is it that it is applicable only to India and not other countries? Are people outside India and Hinduism so poverty-stricken spiritually that not a single individual is to be found among them, who has attained that level of spiritual attainment required for being included in the Hindu caste system? If foreigners are not to be taken into Hindu castes, how were the foreign invaders and large sections of aborigines absorbed by Hinduism?

The writer further says: "Otherwise our society will dwindle in numbers and Hinduism will be lost by the non-existence of Hindus. What strange fears people have in these days when the only fear which is a saving fear, viz., fear of transgressing

the laws of God has fled from their hearts! If we look to our duties, God will look the rest. We are not like other races of men priding ourselves upon our religion having the largest following. That a religion has a large following is no passport to human praise or divine grace."

## II

The above is an uncompromising defence of all the social ideas of Hindu fundamentalism. We shall now give extracts from an equally uncompromising condemnation of the caste system by Dr. Ambedkar in his recent booklet entitled "Annihilation of Caste." He opines that economically caste has led to social inefficiency, eugenically it has produced a C<sub>3</sub> race, "a race of pigmies and dwarfs stunted in stature and wanting in stamina" nine-tenths of which is unfit for military service. "Caste has, however, done one thing. It has completely disorganised and demoralised the Hindus."

Dr. Ambedkar is of opinion that caste does not permit the growth of a united society or nation. He says: "The first and foremost thing that must be recognised is that Hindu Society is a myth. (?) . . . It is only a collection of castes. Each caste is conscious of its existence. Its survival is the be-all and end-all of its existence. Castes do not even form a federation. A caste has no feeling that is affiliated to other castes, except when there is a Hindu-Muslim riot . . . . Indeed the ideal Hindu must be like a rat living in his own hole and refusing to have any contact with others. There is an utter lack among the Hindus of what the sociologists call 'consciousness of kind'." There are, however, many

patriotic Indians who insist that underlying the apparent diversity there is a fundamental unity which marks the life of the Hindu inasmuch as there is a similarity of habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts, which obtain all over the continent of India. But neither physical proximity nor similarity in habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts is enough to constitute men into society. "For that purpose what is necessary is for a man to share and participate in a common activity so that the same emotions are aroused in him that animate the others. Making the individual a sharer or partner in the associated activity so that he feels its success as his success, its failure as his failure, is the real thing that binds men and makes a society of them. The Caste system prevents common activity and by preventing common activity it has prevented the Hindus from becoming a society with a unified life and consciousness of its own being."

All Hindus may not accept this statement but many may be disposed to take it as the exaggeration of a truth. The reader can profitably compare this statement with Mr. Sastri's view that caste does not stand in the way of national unity.

Speaking about the cultural clannishness of the Hindus, Dr. Ambedkar says that the question of the exclusion of the aboriginal tribes from the new reforms has drawn the public attention to the fact that these number 13 millions, if not more. That such large numbers of men still live in a savage state in a land that boasts of a civilisation thousands of years old should be a matter of shame to the Hindus. The Hindus will contend that this is due to the congenital

stupidity of these people and that they have done their best to civilise them. "But supposing a Hindu wished to do what the Christian missionary is doing for these aboriginals, could he have done it? I submit, not. Civilising the aboriginals means adopting them as your own, living in their midst, and cultivating fellow-feeling, in short loving them. How is it possible for a Hindu to do this? His whole life is one anxious effort to preserve his caste . . . . He can't consent to lose it by establishing contact with the aboriginals—the remnants of the hateful Anaryas of the Vedic days. Not that a Hindu could not be taught the sense of duty to fallen humanity. But the trouble is that no amount of sense of duty can enable him to overcome his duty to preserve his caste. Caste is therefore the real explanation as to why the Hindu has let the savage in the midst of his civilisation to remain a savage without blushing or without feeling any sense of remorse or repentance."

This may be compared with the two contentions of Mr. Sastri that the caste system elevates the fallen with a loving hand, and that for the preservation of purity, prohibition of foreign travel under ordinary conditions is highly desirable. One may be tempted to question Dr. Ambedkar if Hinduism has never been capable of absorbing aboriginal people, what has happened to the rest of them besides the present 13 millions.

Dr. Ambedkar characterises caste as immoral. "The effects of caste on the ethics of the Hindus," he says "is simply deplorable. Caste has killed public spirit. Caste has destroyed the sense of public charity. Caste has made public opinion impossible. A Hindu public is his caste. . . . .

Virtue has become caste-ridden and morality has become caste-bound. There is no sympathy with the deservng. There is no appreciation of the meritorious .... There is charity but it begins and ends with the caste. There is sympathy but not for men of other caste..... The capacity to appreciate merit in a man apart from his caste does not exist in a Hindu."

The Hindu conscience has to answer this challenge of the Depressed Classes by action in life.

It is often said that the survival of the Hindus as a cultural group through millenniums of vicissitudes testifies to the soundness of their social institutions. To this Dr. Ambedkar replies: "I fear that this statement may become the basis of a vicious argument that the fact of survival is proof of fitness to survive. It seems to me that the question is not whether a community lives or dies; the question is, on what plane does it live. There are different modes of survival. But all are not equally honourable. For an individual as well as a society there is a gulf between merely living and living worthily. To fight in a battle and live in glory is one mode. To beat a retreat, to surrender and live the life of a captive is also a mode of survival. What we must consider is what is the quality of that survival .. The Hindus' has been a life of continuous defeat and what appears to them to be life ever-lasting is not living ever-lastingly but is really a life which is perishing ever-lastingly. It is a mode of survival of which every right-minded Hindu who is not afraid to own up the truth will feel ashamed."

How is caste to be abolished then? Says Dr. Ambedkar, "Make every man and woman free from the thralldom to the Shastras, cleanse their minds of the pernicious notions founded on the Shastras ... you must have courage to tell the Hindus that what is wrong with them is their religion.. you must destroy the authority of the Shastras and the Vedas."

### III

To our mind what appears strange and surprising is that both a friend and a foe of caste system should proceed on the common assumption that caste system is of the very essence of Hinduism. There is as much truth in this statement as in confounding Medieval Feudalism or modern capitalism of Europe with Christianity. Hinduism without caste is neither a theoretical nor a practical impossibility. In fact what the Buddha did was to liberate the spiritual ideals of India from the yoke of any particular form of social organisation, and his movement cannot be called unsuccessful, even though there is no separate religion as Buddhism in India to-day. The same was attempted by many reformers in Medieval India, and two very successful of these movements still persist in our midst as Sikhism in the North and Virasaivism in the South. It is therefore no new-born prejudice of modern Hindus.

To our mind neither Mr. Sastri nor Dr. Ambedkar has shown any necessary and inseparable relation between Hinduism and caste, unless it be that such a notion prevails in the minds of vast numbers of Hindus. Even a superficial observer of Hindu society today will find that the forces of modern life have in almost irrepara-

ble a manner battered the three main pillars of the caste system—hereditary determination of occupation, restriction regarding inter-dining, and marriage in one's own caste. Even Hindu fundamentalism has become reconciled to the first of these and we never hear of any protest against men of the most orthodox families selecting the most heterodox of professions. Cosmopolitanism in dining has become very familiar in these days, and even in the matter of marital choice cases of violation of caste rules are not very rare at present. It may be said without fear of contradiction that in the case of the majority of educated men observance of caste rules, as far as it still obtains, is more a matter of convenience than of conviction. The sense of sin, which past generations of men used to feel when breaches of caste rules were made, has now become either blurred in, or totally erased from, the conscience of modern educated Hindus.

The modern movement for the abolition of untouchability is an attack directed against the most vulnerable nerve-centre of the caste system; for besides being a humanitarian movement, it is also a challenge to the notion of congenital purity and impurity which Hindu fundamentalism has been maintaining by what appears to our mind, a misapplication of the doctrine of Karma and transmigration. That is why we find to-day Hindu fundamentalism in deadly opposition to the anti-untouchability movement—not because fundamentalists are devoid of humanitarian sentiments, as it is sometimes supposed.

The weight of educated opinion to-day seems to be on the side of these caste-breaking tendencies. There

is no use condemning people of this school of thought as impious, irreligious or ungodly. Some of them may be so, but quite a large number of them are as pious and devoted to Hindu spiritual ideals as any representative of Hindu fundamentalism. If we pooh-pooh or disregard this increasing volume of opinion in the country, we shall only fail to notice the symptoms of the revolution in thought that is taking place in modern Hinduism. This change consists in the recognition that the pure spiritual content of religion has no inevitable or even necessary relation with any social system, except in so far as it is to leaven the latter with the principle of Dharma, the universal law of righteousness. We believe it is proper to characterise this change as the recapture of the old Buddha spirit by the modern Hindu conscience.

It is also to be remembered that this divorce of caste consciousness from the spiritual ideal is symptomatic of a still deeper change in the Hindu outlook. For many centuries past, Hinduism has practically been an ethnic religion, and the Hindu conceived as one so born and never so made. It was an extension of this idea that resulted in the notion that salvation can be obtained only after one passes through the discipline of the caste system, and is finally born of Brahmin parentage. Even in the writing of Mr. Sastri we get a faint echo of this tenacious belief prevailing among many Hindu fundamentalists. But the belief outrages the facts of history and need not be taken seriously; for no one can deny that men of exemplary piety and spiritual illumination have been very often born in lower castes and out-castes of Hinduism in spite of serious cultural

handicaps, and among societies in and out of India belonging to non-Hindu religions. In fact caste is no indicator of man's spiritual level. An uncompromising recognition of this is necessary if the ethnic Hinduism of the old law codes is to develop into the universal Hinduism of the Bhagavad Gita. That alone can claim to be a universal religion whose beliefs, practices and institutions are open to all who are duly qualified, irrespective of hereditary or other extraneous considerations. Now caste system, according to Hindu fundamentalism, is closed to all who are not born in it. The idea is quite sound if caste is admitted to be only a social experiment having either a eugenic or economic value alone. Hindu fundamentalism would, however, assertively claim more for it and go so far as to urge that caste system is essentially spiritual in principle, universal in application and strictly hereditary in its organisation. The only way of reconciling these incompatible claims is to invoke the doctrine of Karma. To our mind this is only to take shelter in obscurantism. For one is at a loss to see why men of evil, selfish and unspiritual tendencies are born in high castes also, if only souls distilled into purity by Karmic laws are admitted into them. The issue is sufficiently plain to a mind free from pre-conceived theories: either separate caste from Hinduism and reduce the former to the position of a *social institution*; or make caste an essential part of the spiritual content of Hinduism and reduce Hinduism to the position of an ethnic religion. Modern Hindu conscience seems to favour the former course, and that is why the gradual development of the passive Hinduism of the

previous centuries into the "Aggressive Hinduism" of our times synchronises with caste-breaking tendencies.

We for our part consider Hinduism to be a universal religion, and we cannot therefore admit that caste is anything more than a social system produced by a combination of causes, racial, economic and political. It is not divine in any special sense, as Mr. Sastri contends, but purely human, and reflects in it all the virtues and failings of human nature. If both the fundamentalists and the virulent critics of Hinduism recognise this fact, the former will cease to be an obstructive and the latter a disruptive force in Hinduism. None will then look askance at a new social experimentation. People will also cease to praise or censure Hinduism for both the real and imaginary virtues and failings of caste system, even as they do not praise or censure Christianity for the similar effects of feudalism or industrialism.

#### IV

Once we thus separate caste from Hindu religion, we shall be in a position to take a thoroughly objective view of it, and judge it purely as a social institution. It is neither to be idealised as Mr. Sastri does, nor condemned downright as Dr. Ambedkar does, however much their personal experience and observations in life may justify their conclusion. To deny its services in the past is as unjust and idle as it is to glorify it as a godsend, perfectly valid for all time and all conditions. If it failed to Hinduise 13 million aboriginal tribes as Dr. Ambedkar points out, it has also to be said that it succeeded in doing so with regard to a much larger number, which accounts for the presence

of numerous sub-castes in Hindu society to-day. This does not, however, entitle it for preference over new social institutions that can do the same work in a better, quicker and more efficient manner. Mr. Sastri is substantially right when he contends that it stressed the co-operative principle, smoothened the wheels of competition and preserved the technical skill of Indian workmen. But on this ground, to hope that it will continue to do so under thoroughly altered world conditions is quite futile and un-warranted. There is no use calling for co-operation when men are consciously unwilling to co-operate. If the cruelty of competition is bad, equally so is the stagnation, lethargy and exclusiveness into which co-operation imperceptibly degenerates. Reliance on hereditary skill will be disastrous in an age when diversity of trade is enticingly innumerable and fitted to all aptitudes, when industrialism is dominated by machinery, large-scale organisation, and scientific research. Again the defensive mechanism of caste has done much to preserve Indian culture when it was threatened with insuperable dangers. But you cannot for ever live in hiding places without prejudice to your dignity as human beings. For merely to survive is not to live well, as Dr. Ambedkar points out. The virile elements will sally forth even into danger zones, and if they are endowed with the true quality of life, absorb the dynamic factors in their environment without surrendering their own distinctiveness. The embankment of taboos and prohibitions cannot for ever imprison the expansive tendencies of racial life.

In fact this dissatisfaction alone can sufficiently explain why many

men, Hindu to the core of their being in other respects, fail to see eye to eye with Hindu fundamentalists in their reverence for caste. For to recognise the services of the bullock bandy for business and communication in the past is one thing, but to advocate its retention as an ideal means of conveyance even in an age of cheap motor and railroad transport is quite another. Efficiency in self-defence, though not in aggression, is what justifies a social system and makes it acceptable to a people. As long as caste proved its worth in this matter people clung to it, but when pitted against Muslim and European social systems it has proved its inefficiency in many respects in spite of its survival value. Unwillingness to contact foreigners has not saved us from foreign influences. For even though we may not wish to contact them, they have come to contact us—first as travellers, then as merchants and finally as conquerors. Bitter experience has taught the modern Hindu that it is not with the aid of taboos but by a greater tightening of the social consciousness alone he can keep himself alive and honourable in this world. In the principle of nationalism which the West has perfected in all its constructive and destructive phases, the best brains of India too seem to recognise the system of organisation which can mobilise the popular will into a unified and dynamic force. The jingoistic and imperialistic tendencies of Western nationalism may not find favour with anyone here, but its healthy principles are accepted by men of awakened political consciousness, and it is generally admired as a higher and more efficient form of social life. Caste mentality is found



to stand in opposition to this process of nation-making ; for it is the parent of communalism, the irreconcilable foe of nationalism. This ugly fact cannot be set aside by simply abusing the communalists. They are but products of the system, and are bound to live or die with the system. Mr. Sastri's analogy of compatibility between joint family life and conjugal love is not quite true even with regard to the example cited ; for to-day under the altered conditions of life the experience of most men proves just the contrary. In the organisation of the herd instinct a division of loyalties between communalism and nationalism leads to disastrous inefficiency—to what may be described as an element of dissociation in the national psychology. For the appeal of both is directed to the same instinct, and the surrender demanded by both is equally unreserved and exclusive. In the social life of to-day there is as little chance of reconciling their claims, as there is of harmonising nationalism and internationalism under the aegis of competitive principle. That is why with the growth of nationalism we meet with increasing condemnation of communalism and its parent caste.

But let no self-respecting Indian join Dr. Ambedkar in his campaign of vili-

fication. If we are to give up the caste system, let us do so not with curses but with grateful recognition of its services—in fact with blessings on our lips for a storm-tossed and weather-beaten institution that aimed high but failed, because men were yet unfit for it. For it was man's first attempt to apply the co-operative principle in social life, and as in the case of all first attempts, especially when they relate to such higher laws of life, we practically made a caricature of it owing to our own unfitness for it. If in future humanity is to find happier and better times, a little relief from the struggle, stress and cruelty of unbridled competition, it is going to do so only through the application of the co-operative principle in the collective life of the world as a whole, avoiding at the same time the big mistakes which caste system made in its *actual working*—exclusive reliance on heredity, exaltation of privileges over duties, and apotheosis of self-complacent passivity into a spiritual principle. For the implication of a world-wide system of co-operation is not caste in any sacerdotal sense but *equity* and *security* in the distribution of world's natural resources, and in the organisation of its political and social life.

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# REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

*By A Disciple*

[Sri Saradunani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was both wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped like a goddess by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of this great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and the simple talks of every-day life.]

T that time, the Holy Mother was living at Kothar, in Orissa. Though I had a vague idea about Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother, I did not know anything in detail about them. At the request of my brother, I came to Kothar to pay my respects to the Mother. It was then about midday. After reaching the place I discovered that my enthusiasm had waned considerably. Other devotees were invited for their lunch and I accompanied them. After our lunch, Rambabu announced that the Mother wanted to see me. An elderly monk said that I should pay my respects to her later in the afternoon ; but Rambabu insisted, and informed us that the Mother was waiting for me. She had not taken her noon-day meal and would do so only after I had visited her. Therefore I accompanied Rambabu and saluted the Mother. We did not exchange many words. Next day I returned home.

I again felt the same enthusiasm to visit the Mother and came back to Kothar. One morning I went to see her, and said that I would like to return home the following morning. The Mother said, "Stay here tomorrow. You may go home the next day." After a while a monk came to me and said, "The Holy Mother has been gracious to you. Be ready

tomorrow morning after your bath." I did not realize the meaning of the word 'grace'. Next morning I was alone after my bath when Sister Radhu came there and said, "Who is Vaikuntha Babu ? The Mother is waiting for him." "My name is Vaikuntha," I said in reply. "Has she sent for me ?" Sister Radhu nodded in the affirmative, and I came to the Mother with her. The Mother said, "Come inside the room." Next she asked if I would like to learn the sacred Mantram \* from her.

Disciple : You may instruct me if you please. I do not know anything about it.

Mother : Very well. Sit here. What aspect of God do you like most ?

Disciple : I do not know.

Mother : Good. You repeat this sacred word.

Thus I was initiated by the Holy Mother. One day I asked her, "Mother, can I accept another teacher to learn Yoga ?" The Mother said in reply, "Yes, you can accept a teacher to learn other things, but the teacher who gives initiation is only one."

I fixed a day for leaving Kothar. During the previous night at about

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\* A sacred word which the disciple repeats at the instruction of his spiritual teacher.

twelve o'clock, Rambabu awakened me from sleep. He had some sweets in his hand. Rambabu said, "Vai-kuntha, Mother has sent these sweets for you. Eat them on the way. She has asked me to tell you not to purchase any food from the roadside stores."

Next time I visited the Mother at Kamarpukur. On the second morning of my stay there, as I came to salute the Mother she asked, "When are you going home?"

Disciple : I have never been to the Belur Math. It is my intention to visit the Math first and then go home.

Mother : You need not go to the Math this time. Please go home to-day.

Disciple : Mother, I have come so near the Math, I do not like to return home without seeing that holy place.

Mother : No. You should go home directly and not disobey your teacher's injunction.

I could not make any further objection, but I thought that after leaving Kamarpukur, I would go straight to the Belur Math. The Mother would not know anything about it. At that time, two devotees from Allahabad, a man and a woman, came to Kamarpukur. The Mother initiated them that day. The Mother asked me to go with them, but as the devotees did not like this suggestion, I remained behind. I accompanied them as far as the main road to see them off. I had left my money-bag in the outer apartment. The Mother saw it there and put it in a secure place. Later on she asked me about my money-bag. I could not find it. The Mother said to me, "One should not be so unpractical in the world. Without a little carefulness,

life becomes impossible. Your money-bag is with me. Why did you not go with the two devotees from Allahabad?" I explained the reason, but the Mother expressed her displeasure. I said to her, "Why are you so worried about it? I will return home to-morrow." After this, the Mother entered her own room.

The same day at noon, she sent for me and said, "Please open these letters and tell me what they contain." I read the letters. I remember particularly the content of one of them. It was from the Udbodhan Office. The substance of the letter was as follows: Reverend Swami Ramakrishnananda† wanted to see the Holy Mother, and he would follow any treatment for his illness, suggested by her. The Mother said, "What treatment shall I suggest? There are Sarat, Rakhal and Baburam. Let him follow their advice. My presence in the house would disturb the patient. That will not be good for him, so I shall not go. It will be extremely difficult for me to be a witness if something terrible happens to the patient. You explain the whole thing and tell them the reason of my inability to go there."

Next day after the noon-day meal, I was going to take leave of the Holy Mother when she asked me if I had visited the shrine of Raghuvir.‡ I answered in the negative. The Mother said, "It is proper to give some offering in the shrine. If you have no money with you, please take

† He was one of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and was in charge of the monastery at Madras. The Swami at that time was suffering from an attack of tuberculosis and had come to Calcutta for treatment.

‡ An epithet of Rama, the family God of Sri Ramakrishna.

it from me." I said that I had enough. I went to the shrine and prostrated before the image. When I was about to take leave of the Mother, she suddenly said, "Vaikuntha, remember me." But the very next moment she added, "Remember Sri Ramakrishna. He will fulfill all your desires."

Lakshmi Didi was present there. She said, "Well, Mother, what is this? This is not right on your part. Why should you delude your children in this way?"

Mother: Why? What have I done?

Lakshmi Didi: You told Vaikuntha a minute ago to remember you, and now you ask him to pray to Sri Ramakrishna.

Mother: Sri Ramakrishna is everything. All his desires will be fulfilled if he only prays to Sri Ramakrishna.

Lakshmi Didi: But it is not right to confuse your children in that way.

Lakshmi Didi then turned to me and said, "Look here, Vaikuntha. This is the first time I have heard the Mother exhorting her children to pray to her. Do not forget this. Who is Sri Ramakrishna after all? You had better pray to her. It is your great fortune that the Mother told you to do so. I again repeat that you should always pray to the Holy Mother." Next, addressing the Holy Mother she said, "Mother, have I said the right thing?" The Mother by her silence indicated her assent.

As I was about to take leave, the Mother again said to me, "You had

better go straight home. You need not visit the Belur Math or any other place on the way. Serve your parents at home. It is good for you to look after your father." I followed her advice and returned home by way of the Koalpara Math. Before I left home, I had seen my father in good health. But after my return I found him bed-ridden with a fatal disease. After a week my father passed away.

I was again going to Kamarpukur to visit the Holy Mother, when one of my brother disciples gave me a letter addressed to her. There were two questions in the letter. The first question was: "I am going to accept a job. Will that involve me in worldliness?" The Mother said in reply, "How does the acceptance of a job involve one in worldliness?" The second question was: "Will it be good for me to marry?" The Mother kept quiet over this question and asked me if I were married. I answered in the negative. The Mother said in reply, "That is good. Don't marry. It brings lots of complications."

One day I asked the Mother "Is there anything wrong in eating fish and meat?" She said, "Here it is a custom to eat fish; you can also do so." During this visit I requested the Mother to give me her footprint some day. She said, "It will not be convenient to do so now. People here do not look upon me in the same way as you do. Many neighbours come to see me. They will criticise the red paint on my toes. I should have to keep myself away from them."

# CONCEPTION OF GOD IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

By Prof. Jadunath Sinha, M.A., Ph.D.

(Continued from last issue)

[In this instalment of Prof. Sinha's article the reader will come across Alexander's bold conception of a Deity who is in the making or who is the ideal God in embryo. Is not this conception comparable to the Buddhist idea of a Bodhisattwa or imperfect man developing into the Buddha, the Perfect Being? In the philosophy of values and in Eucken's message of universal spiritual life, the religious mind will recognise some ideas congenial to its tastes and inclinations.]

**D**R. WARD also gives us a pluralistic theism. The world, according to him, is an indefinite variety of psychic existences, of different degrees of perfection, all tending to self-realisation. Each of them is a self. No two of them are exactly alike. The world is a system of inter-acting selves. The world is not a unity differentiated into plurality, but a plurality organising itself into a unity. If the whole world is psychical, how is it that we have apparently self-less beings in the world of matter? With Bergson, Ward argues that matter is only the arrest of spirit. Ward is a pluralist: he believes in the plurality of finite selves which are absolutely free and carve out their own destiny. He brings in the conception of God only to direct the evolution of the world. But his God is a member of the kingdom of persons; he has his limitations, though his limitations are self-imposed. He has no fore-knowledge. How can he know the future of the world? It depends not merely on God but also on other free agents whom he sustains but never constrains. God is the *primus inter pares*—supreme among equals.

Ward asks: "What is Reality? Pluralist and singularist alike answer:

It is experience. But the difference between them is that the pluralist is content to stop at the totality of finite experiences, whereas the singularist or the theist maintains that beyond the universe of the many there is a single transcendent experient, who perfectly comprehends the whole." The Pluralist does not believe in a single transcendent experient, but in many finite experients. "The pluralistic whole is a whole of experiences, a whole of lives but not a living whole, a whole of beings but without a complete and perfect being." (*Realm of Ends*, pp 228-229). To Ward God is not the all-comprehending reality or the Absolute, but a part of the Absolute. "A theism that is reached through pluralism," says Ward, "can never end in an Absolute in which God and the World alike are absorbed and lost; the only Absolute then that we can admit is the Absolute which God and the World constitute. God and the World constitute the Absolute." (*Realm of Ends*, pp. 241-242). Ward admits the reality of the world. "If the reality of the world be admitted, then this reality stands over against the reality of God. God indeed has not been limited from without but he has limited himself. We do not say

that God comes into being with the world but only that as the ground of the world he limits himself." (*Realm of Ends*, p. 244). "How God creates the world and thereby limits himself we can never understand." (*Ibid*, p. 245). We have seen that Ward draws a distinction between the Absolute and God. God and the world together constitute the Absolute. God, in being limited by the world, is limited by himself. But he is also limited by free finite spirits. Ward says, "The Absolute must be in every respect all-inclusive, but God, if his creatures are free, is so far not all-inclusive. The Creator together with his creatures may be called the Absolute." (*Ibid*, p. 313). "From the standpoint of the many, we have no ground for assuming a Creator who does everything but only a Creator whose creatures create in turn. The real world must be the joint result of God and Man." (*Ibid*, pp. 352-353). "Starting from the Many as real we can never reach an Absolute into which they are absorbed and vanish. As related to them God must be determined and limited by them; he cannot be as if they were not. If then he is not to be merely one of them, not merely *primus inter pares*, this limitation must be an internal limitation; God we must say, is their Creator; and in creating them he has determined himself." (*Ibid*, p. 437). "Though God created us he created us free and to be co-workers with himself." (*Ibid* p. 439). Thus God, the world and the finite spirits together constitute the Absolute of Ward who thus advocates the doctrine of a finite God.

Thus Intuitionists, Pragmatists and Personal Idealists all give us a plurality of finite spirits under the guidance

of a finite and limited God. But all these doctrines are fast going out of fashion. Realism has come to the fore. Intuitionism takes us too high to the dreamland of fancy. Pragmatism is the philosophy of men in the street and as such is too low for educated men. Idealism, personal or absolute, is a veritable bugbear to many in the present day. 'Down with all idealism:—that is the war-cry to-day. So, over the graves of all these systems the Realist is building his edifice. There are three schools of Realism in the present day, one led by Bertrand Russel, Alexander, and Moore in England, another led by Perry and Marvin in America, and the other led by Drake and Pratt in America.

Here I shall deal with the views of Alexander and Russel with regard to God. Alexander traces the whole reality to the matrix of Space-Time. "Abandoning the attempt to define God directly, we may ask ourselves whether there is place in the world for the quality of deity." Alexander answers that in the evolution of the world out of Space-Time higher and higher qualities are gradually emerging. "There is a *nisus* in Space-Time which as it has borne its creatures forward through matter and life to mind, will bear them forward to some higher level of existence. Deity is the next higher empirical quality to mind, which the universe is engaged in bringing to birth." (*Space, Time and Deity*, pp. 346-347). Thus God is not the director of the evolution of the world but a product of its evolution. "As actual," says Alexander "God does not possess the quality of deity but is the universe as tending to that quality. Only in this sense of straining towards deity can there be

an infinite actual God.. There is no actual infinite being with the quality of deity ; but there is an actual infinite, the whole universe, with a nisus to deity ; and this is the God of the religious consciousness, though that consciousness habitually forecasts the divinity of its object as actually realised in an individual form." (*Ibid*, pp. 361-362). Thus, according to Alexander, God is not, *but is to be*. He asks : " Does infinite deity exist ? " He roundly answers : " The world in its infinity tends towards infinite deity, or is pregnant with it, but infinite deity does not exist. Deity is the ideal of God in embryo. (*Ibid*, p. 365). " Deity is some quality not realised but in process of realisation, is future and not present." (*Ibid*, p. 379).

But if Alexander consoles us with the promise of a future God—a God in embryo, Russel rudely shatters all our dream of God. His scheme of reality has no room for God or immortality. He has no sympathy for Pragmatist's advice to act as if there were a God, and as if we were immortal. He has no sympathy for pragmatism or the philosophy of "as ifs." Would you act as if you were a multi-millionaire or the monarch of the whole world to avoid discontentment? The universe is rotten to the core. There is no place of God in it. Theology is a fraud and religion a mockery. We must totally disbelieve in God. We must not live in fool's paradise. We must not believe that good will triumph over evil. We must not anxiously await a brighter and happier existence after death. Death is the end of all : and we must submit to it in calm resignation. Morality is a myth ; religion is a delusion. This is indeed realism with a venge-

ance ! It breathes the spirit of the grim materialism of the present day.

Amidst all these rebellious tendencies the voice of Idealism has not altogether been hushed. Man cannot live without Idealism. So Idealism is raising a faint voice here and there. But it is not the same old intellectual Absolutism of Hegel. It is anti-intellectualistic. One of these idealistic tendencies is found in Germany, the cradle of Western Idealism. It is called the Philosophy of Values. It enquires into the validity of the ultimate values of life, viz., the true, the good, and the beautiful. Are they relative or absolute ? Do they exist in themselves unrelated to any finite mind ? Or do they depend on the individual tastes and subjective feelings ? The empiricist and the pragmatist reduce the true to the useful, the good to the expedient, and the beautiful to the pleasant. They deny their absolute existence and their universal and necessary character. But the philosophy of values recognises them as absolute forms existing independently of finite minds ; they are universally valid ; they are universal and necessary presuppositions of our intellectual, moral, and aesthetic judgments. They are ontological verities or absolute realities. They are not subjective but objective ; they are not relative but absolute ; they are not individual but over-individual or universal. Rickert holds that these absolute values or universal norms are transcendent *oughts* which are real in themselves. All *Being* (Mussen) is the realisation of *ought* (Sollen). So *ought* is prior to *is*. According to Rickert, the absolute norms or values of life, viz., Truth, Good, and Beauty exist in themselves in a transcendent void

craving for realisation through individual minds. These *oughts* do not exist in God; they are not realised in God. Munsterberg also recognises the reality of these eternal values, pure norms, or absolute *oughts*; but he does not recognise their existence divorced from, and unsupported by, any form of consciousness. Munsterberg differs from Rickert in so far as he holds that these absolute norms or values, though independent of finite egos, are not external to the Super-Ego or ultra-personal will. Munsterberg posits a Super-Ego or over-individual will to support and give meaning to the eternal values of life. But the Super-Ego of Munsterberg is not a conscious spirit or God; but it is unconscious and unintelligent will which is eternal action, incessant effort of self-preservation and self-expansion. Josiah Royce of America puts the philosophy of values on a solid speculative basis by grafting it on Hegelian Idealism. He brings down the eternal values of life, truth, good, and beauty from the transcendent sphere to the ideal order immanent in Absolute consciousness. They find their eternal satisfaction not in the impersonal will or Super-Ego of Munsterberg but in the Divine Will of Royce. God is the eternally true, the eternally good, and the eternally beautiful.

Besides the philosophy of values in Germany, Eucken offers us another type of new Idealism. It may be called universal spiritualism or spiritualistic activism. According to Eucken, our life is action and not mere thought or intelligence. Intellect cannot give us a complete view of life; it breaks up the one continuous life into discontinuous elements and interprets it in terms of mechanical

concepts. But life is not a logical system; it is always changing and growing; it overflows the categories of logic; it can be known only by action or spiritual activity. Truth cannot be known by intellect or thought; nor can it be known by intuition, emotion, or aesthetic sense; it can be known only by deep spiritual action. Naturalism reduces life to a mechanical process. Intellectualism reduces life to thought. Eucken rejects both. He regards life as essentially action. Philosophy, according to him, is no mere reflection upon life; it is rather a vital function of our spiritual activity. It is that form of spiritual activity which brings to coherent expression the intuitions of our experience. Eucken subordinates theory to action. He calls upon us to act to know the truth and meaning of life. But what are we to realise in life or action? We must realise our spiritual life. We must rise above Nature and enter into the life of Spirit. We must cease to be the children of Nature. We must have a spiritual rebirth. But what does Eucken exactly mean by the spiritual life? He does not define or explain it. He leaves everything vague and indefinite about it. He only tells us that it is an inward, self-sufficing, independent life. The spiritual life is necessarily the universal, the divine, the free and creative life. So, we should give up our false self-satisfaction and capture the cosmic spiritual life in which human life is rooted. The duty of man is not only to realise his spiritual nature but also to subordinate all things to the higher life of spirit. Eucken substitutes spiritual activism to mystic quietism and emphasises the practical work of building the



spiritual kingdom. Eucken's philosophy is beautifully vague from the beginning to the end. He does not say definitely what spiritual life is. He says mysticism is the highest religion; and it is living the life of God. But what is his conception of God? Sometimes he identifies God with the self-sufficing, eternal, cosmic energy; and sometimes he makes God a growing, changing, dynamic force. Eucken is not definite on the nature of God and his relation to man. He feels that we cannot prove the existence of a personal God. The nature of the Divine can only be felt by the divine in us.

Eucken is more a prophet than a philosopher. He gives us the message of universal spiritual life in this materialistic age. He asks us to create a Heaven on earth by our persistent spiritual activities. He inspires us with his religious enthusiasm and lifts us to a larger and higher plane of existence. But he does not give us a systematic philosophy. As a preacher he is a herald of the New Age of spiritual enlightenment; but as a philosopher he is a complete failure.

But Eucken is not the only prominent idealist of the present day. Croce and Gentile of Italy give us another type of Neo-Idealism. It is a revival of Hegelian Idealism stripped of all intellectual elements. Hegel's completed reality or eternally fulfilled Absolute has been attacked under the name of "block universe" by William James and the pragmatists, by Bergson and the intuitionists, by the realists, and finally by the neo-idealists. Croce and Gentile are at one with Hegel in holding that the only thing that exists in the universe is mind, and History is the History

of mind. If the reality is a static Absolute, eternally fulfilled, it cannot advance in time; it cannot progress if the structure of thought is already complete, the activity of thinking, which implies change and development, cannot be the essence of reality. If we are to admit the Hegelian doctrine that Philosophy is History we must discard his static Absolute, eternally self-fulfilled and self-complete, and concentrate on the multiplicity and immediacy of experience. This is done by Croce and Gentile. For them, mind,—active, self-creative and self-creating mind, is the only reality in the universe, and besides mind there is nothing. There is not even an all-generative Absolute at the beginning or an all-merging Absolute in the end. The universe consists in the continual advance in time—in the continual unrolling of mental events. Thus reality is a perpetual becoming whose completion is self-contradictory. Reality is not a progress *ad infinitum*; it is a recurrence of cycles; its movement is cyclic; at every instant something is attained, yet nothing is ever completely attained; and this twofold characteristic is exhibited by reality throughout. The progress of reality is a perpetual solution of a problem and a perpetually renascent problem demanding a new solution. The gist of the Neo-Idealism of Croce and Gentile is this: The only reality is mind; mind is self-creative and self-creating; it is essentially active; it is ever progressive; there is nothing but this movement; there is no end to which it tends, and there is no source from which it springs. The spirit is an infinite possibility overflowing into infinite actuality. But

the neo-idealists cannot account for this perpetual movement of Spirit, which has neither a beginning nor an end. It is something like Bergson's *elan vital* spiritualised. Whence, Whither and Wherefore of the movement of the Spirit remain an enigma.\*

This is the age of ceaseless action and not of quiet contemplation. So the philosophy of the present day represents activism as opposed to quietism. All the present philosophical tendencies are the philosophy of change, action, movement; they never enquire into the origin or the end of this movement. They represent the spirit of the restless man of to-day who is always moving and moving but never cares to know whence he is moving, whither he is moving, and why he is moving. He is lost in his movement; so the present day philosophy is lost in change, movement, activity. This is the age of

poetic institutions and wild inspirations, and not of plodding and hesitating intellect. So the philosophy of the present day is a reaction against intellectualism. It is intuitionism, aestheticism, moralism, or spiritual activism. This is the age of democracy and individualism; so the philosophy of this age is democratic and individualistic. It gives us either a pluralistic theism or an atheistic pluralism of finite spirits. And lastly, this is pre-eminently the age of liberty and freedom. So the philosophy of this age is pre-eminently the philosophy of absolute freedom and unrestrained activity. In short, the philosophy of today is the philosophy of anarchy, disorder, confusion. The future philosophy of the world must try to restore the equilibrium of human life by harmonising the discordant and rebellious forces of our nature, and it must try to reconcile being with becoming, the eternal with the temporal, the individual with the universal, intellect with intuition, quietism with activism, moral sense with aesthetic vision and give us a more complete and harmonious view of life as a whole.

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\*Perry: *Present Philosophical Tendencies*.

Otta: *Idealistic Reaction against Science*.

Radhakrishnan: *Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy*.

Joad: *Introduction to Modern Philosophy*.

(Concluded.)

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## A HINDU SPEAKS TO CHRISTIANS

By Swami Prabhavananda

[Swami Prabhavananda is the founder and leader of the Vedanta Society, Hollywood, California. In the following article the Swami gives a very simple exposition of the theory of Revelation propounded by Sri Ramakrishna reconciling the claims of all religions to be true and divinely inspired. His words are addressed to all who are bigotted and narrow in their religious outlook. Perhaps Christians are specially mentioned only because they are the greatest sinners in this respect.]

**W**HAT is Religion? Philosophers and theologians define God and Religion in terms of human laws of relation and causation. A Hindu defines religion in terms of realisation, of experience. Religion is to *see* God, to *know* God. This seeing and knowing is neither the perception of the senses nor the knowledge of the intellect. Vision of the divine has to develop; one has to evolve into a God-man, a Christ-man, or a Buddha-man, to see God, to know God. In Sanskrit terminology this knowledge of God is described as *triputi-bheda*, a state wherein the three knots of knowledge,—the knower, the knowledge, and the object of knowledge are obliterated. There remains the unitary consciousness of “I am”, or “God is”.

When one knows God, can he define his experience? To define is to limit. Who can express the inexpressible “whom words cannot express, from whom the mind comes away baffled, unable to reach”? “Silence is His name.”

A story is told of how a father sent his son to learn of God. The boy lived with a renowned teacher for many years. After finishing his course of study he came back. His father asked him what he had learnt. The boy gave a fine discourse on God, quoting verse after verse from the Scriptures. His father listened to him

with pleasure, but remarked, “My boy, go back to your teacher. You have not yet learned what is to be learned.” The boy went back and studied for further years, and then returned again to his home. His father asked him the same question as before. This time the boy answered nothing, rapt in contemplation. Then his father exclaimed, “Why, my boy, your face shines like a knower of Brahman! You have known Him whose name is silence.”

Vain therefore are all discussions and theories of religion and of God. A bee disturbs the quiet with its humming until it sits on the flower and begins to suck the nectar. But when tasting the nectar it is silent. In the same way, when a man actually tastes the bliss of God, he becomes silent. When the bee has its fill, being intoxicated, it may sing a sweet note. The God-intoxicated man, the Christ-man, after having realised the sea of bliss, sings the song celestial and speaks to us of the Kingdom of God. Yet could he ever express Infinity?

Moses and Christ, Krishna and Buddha, no doubt, saw God, became absorbed in him, nay, became one with Him. Yes, they are the children of Light, Light themselves, yet when they hold the Light before others in the realm of relativity, the darkness of that realm to which belong all

attempts at expression comprehends not the Light.

The truth of the matter is that God is indefinable, inexpressible. Sri Ramakrishna, the great modern saint of India, used to say, "Everything has been defiled, as it were, like the leavings of food, except the truth of God. The Vedas, the Bible, the Quoran, all have come out of the lips of man, have been uttered by human tongue. But the truth of God has never been given utterance by any man." God is realisable, but He is realised in a state of consciousness beyond all relativity, beyond all name and form; the Hindus call that state *Nirvikalpa samadhi*, the Buddhists call it *Nirvana*, and Christians, the Divine Communion.

Once a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna urged his master to describe the experience of *Samadhi*. Sri Ramakrishna made the attempt. But every time he tried to give utterance to the experience he became absorbed in the experience itself. He then gave up the attempt as impossible, remarking with a smile, "A doll made of salt goes to measure the depth of the ocean. But as soon as it enters the ocean it melts away. Who is there to describe the ocean?"

Be he a Moses or a Christ, a Krishna or a Buddha, none can exhaustively express the Infinite God; none can give full and complete information concerning the Kingdom of Heaven.

Attempts indeed have been made by each and all of the great teachers of humanity to show us the light, the truth, the way. But the fact is that when all is said each of them shows us only one ray of that great light, one aspect of the infinite truth, one

way among the innumerable ways that lead to Him.

A student of comparative religions is often lost in the intricate maze of opinions about God and religion that are held by the different prophets. If he be prejudiced, and lean towards one opinion to the exclusion of all others, he misses the truth. God may be compared to the chameleon of varying hues. One seeing it at one time, thinks it red; another seeing it at another time, thinks it blue; another seeing it at still another time, thinks it yellow, and so forth. When these different people compare notes in regard to their experiences, they find themselves contradicting one another. Yet they each report the truth, and in reality their experiences are not contradictory. It is the same with these different great teachers. Each of them reports a different truth about God. All of them are right, and yet none exhausts the truth. And naturally in their attempts to express the Infinite God, they appear different and contradictory, for they can express only one of His aspects. The Vedas truly declare, "Truth is one; sages call it by various names." There is a common Hindu saying: "He is no saint who differs not."

One day the God-intoxicated Sri Ramakrishna was heard talking to the Mother of the universe in the temple thus: "Mother, everyone says 'My watch keeps correct time'; the Christians, the Hindus, the Mahomedans, all say 'My religion is the true religion'. But Mother, nobody's watch is exact. Who can truly know Thee? But again if one seeks Thee with a yearning heart, one can reach Thee by Thy grace through any path, through any religion."

The followers of any one of the different religions make the greatest blunder when they claim their religion to be the only true religion. No religion, howsoever great, is perfect and true if it claims to reveal the all-perfect God. That is an impossible claim! The source of all revelation is God. No revelation can reveal perfectly the source. All the religions of the world spring from Him, and therefore no one of them can contain Him within its boundary. God is all-inclusive. All religions are contained in Him.

The religions of Aryan origin never make a claim that they alone are true or that they exhaust the truth. Buddha propounds his own doctrines and philosophy and then remarks that nobody should make the mistake of thinking that what he has taught exhausts the infinite truth. There are, he says, other truths, other doctrines, which are equally true. Sri Krishna, the greatest interpreter of the Vedic Religion, explicitly points out that the Vedas, the teachings of religion, are within *maya*, within relativity, and therefore do not reveal perfectly the absolute truth. "Be thou above *maya*", he says, "above relativity, and know the Absolute Self."

None of the existing religions of the world is perfect, and the solution of the religious problem is not in attempting the impossible task of founding a perfect religion. The religions of the world, though not perfect, are true, inasmuch as they reveal to us the way, the path, to the realisation of Absolute Truth. "As many religions, so many paths." The path leads to the goal, the path is not the goal. When the goal is reached, one is no longer a Hindu, or a Chris-

tian, or a Buddhist. Be born in a religion, but do not die in it.

A significant incident is related in one of the Scriptures of the Hindus. Suka, a spiritual aspirant, approached the royal sage Janaka to learn of God. Janaka said, "My boy, before I give you the knowledge of God you must give me my fee." "Revered sir, how is that?" said Suka "why do you want the fee to be offered beforehand?" Janaka replied, "When I give you the Light of knowledge, there will be no longer any teacher or disciple. You will realise the One Existence beyond all relativity."

The sum and substance of the whole truth of religion is to know God, to realise Him. It is not subscribing to one creed or to another; it is neither being a Christian, nor being a Hindu. Follow any path, any of the great religions in its pure form, and attain the one and the same goal. Christ, or Buddha, or Krishna, each shows us the way, the life, the light. Follow any that suits your needs, and it will lead you to the ocean of bliss, where are many Christs, Buddhas, and Krishnas. Arjuna worshipped Krishna as God. Krishna asked him to follow him. Krishna then brought him to where there was a tree, and pointing to it, said, "What do you see?" Arjuna replied, "I see a tree." "What else?" asked Krishna. Arjuna saw many Krishnas hanging like fruits on the branches of the tree. Krishna smiled and said, "That is the tree of God, the Absolute Existence."

Let us imagine for a moment that to-day on this earth have met together the great world teachers, Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ, Mahomet, Ramakrishna. Won't they not be

happy together? Won't they not be embracing one another, finding themselves in the same kingdom of blissful existence?

Now let us consider the actual state of things among the professed followers of these great *avatars*. Place together a Rabbi, a Hindu priest, a Catholic priest, a Protestant minister. What would you find? Would you not find them, perhaps, tearing one another to pieces? Why should such things be? Because of ignorance and fanaticism. Fanaticism is a sort of disease in the brain,

of which many a preacher needs to be cured. Blind indeed are they who claim to have found the whole truth and denounce other truths.

If one is a spiritual aspirant, one should beware of fanaticism. There need be no quarrels or disputes regarding God and religion. All the creed we require can be summed up in the following simple words: *God is existence. The purpose of life is to attain Him. The way to attain Him is to yearn for Him. To yearn for Him is to pray earnestly: "Lord, reveal Thyself unto me."*

## IS HINDU CULTURE OTHER-WORLDDLY?

*By Dr. V. Raghavan, M.A., Ph. D.*

[Dr. Raghavan is a Sanskrit scholar of the Madras University. He was honoured this year by being invited to deliver the T. R. Venkatarama Sastri Endowment Lecture for 1936. In the following article, which constitutes the substance of this lecture, he disproves, by a general review of Sanskrit literature, the false theory that the Hindus knew nothing about the golden mean between the extremes of world-scorning asceticism on the one hand and voluptuous sensuality on the other.]

**W**HILE some laud India as the mystic East, the land of the seers, the cradle of religion and philosophy, there are others who say it differently,—that Indian thought was other-wordly, over-occupied with meditation, pessimistic, ascetic, inactive and barren of advancement in worldly branches of learning on which 'good life' on earth depends. The Hindu is said to be an other-wordly being and his philosophy is said to teach the very undesirable doctrine of the illusoriness of the world. It is believed by many a student of Hindu culture that to the Hindu life was unreal, the world was not, was an evil he must fly away from; that this doctrine and the theory of *karma* had made the Hindu a pessimist who had no joy in life, no intention to live a

'good life,' and enjoy the good things of this world; and that the Hindu was enchanted with the ideal of an ascetic, all-renouncing, empty life. Such a view of life, the critics say, is hardly conducive to the development of a healthy theism and a scheme of ethical conduct. As a matter of fact, Flint and MacNicol deny any genuine theism in Hindu Philosophy and numberless are the writers who deplore the fact that the Advaitic conception of the world is incompatible with any scheme of ethical conduct. This criticism has been dinned into our ears, and through auto-suggestion and inferiority-complex, we have begun to think ourselves to be a race incompetent for life in this world. Recently, clever and perverse Anglo-Indian journalists and writers

have advanced this over-philosophical temperament and indifference to this world as an argument against our claims to Self-government and freedom. Echoing, as it were, the opinion of such critics, an Indian writes in a recent number of the *Hindusthan Review* states that Hindu Philosophy needs to be rewritten if India has to live a life of dignity among the nations of the world. It is supposed by missionary writers and political propagandists that it is only as a result of the discharge of the white man's burden through the two functionings of the ruler and the missionary that India today is becoming active and learning how to enjoy life.

As the basis of all these opinions is the insufficient understanding of Hindu history and literature. The real cause of the spread of this half-truth is to be found in the history of European study of Indian Literature, which was for a long time, and even now, is predominantly interesting itself only in the religious and philosophical books, the Vedas, the Upanishads and the books of Buddhism and Jainism, for purposes of Comparative Philology and Comparative Religion. To generalise from a part of a nation's literature is very bad. It is one thing to pay due tribute to the eminence of ancient Hindu achievement in Philosophy. But to call them other-worldly is to forget the richness of their intellectual activity in other aspects of culture. One should understand that the Sanskrit literature which time, neglect and the library-burners have spared to us today is but a part of what it was. And a proper study of all the available literature will amply show that there is a vast literature in Sanskrit

which is hardly philosophical or religious, which is secular in nature, which deals with worldly subjects that promote the happiness of men, and which testify to the high achievements the ancient Hindus made in secular and technical branches of learning. It is foolish to suppose that a big country with such a long history did nothing but meditate; that the Hindu nation has lived through its long history by not living life. Dr. Keith says that nothing can be farther from truth than to suppose that the Indian was a person given to reflection and religious practices only to the neglect of practical life, and that to form a right judgment of India, one must add to *Dharma*, the two other objects of life, *Artha* and *Kama*. It is said by everybody that India was proverbially wealthy; did not India then enjoy her wealth? India was rich in wares that had an international market in the old world. She was draining Roman cities of their wealth with her articles of luxury. The Indians were an active maritime and commercial people who had colonies overseas. Evidence of literature, native and foreign, philology, numismatics and sculpture bear this out. The *Artha Sastra* and *Kama Sastra* literature, the story books of the *Kathasaritsagara*, etc., the dramatic types of the *Prakarama* and the *Prahasana* and the *Bhana*, the *Kavyas*, the prose romances like the *Dasakumaracarita*—these depict a people who intensely enjoyed life. Every bit of science which Mediaeval Europe got was from India, through Arabia. Mathematics, Astronomy, Medicine, both human and veterinary, grammar, poetics, minerals, gems, law, government, love, architecture, engineering, the useful arts

and crafts—these were some of the numerous secular branches of study in which ancient Hindus achieved distinction. India taught the world how to spend the leisure hours intelligently by inventing the chess and the fables. When writers supplement their study of *Brahmanavidya* with a study of *Kshatriyavidyas* and *Vaisyavidyas*, they will have a proper understanding of Hindu culture.

It was not that every class of Indian in old days educated himself for a spiritual life and religious career. There was the *Nagaraka*, city-bred gentleman, as also the city-bred lady, who had to be proficient in the sixty-four arts if he or she were to be respected as cultured. An examination of these sixty-four items would show clearly whether the Hindu was active or inactive, other-worldly or this-worldly, enjoying or abstaining, virile or imbecile. One of the arts is general proficiency and competence in worldly affairs. Typical *Nagarakas* and social heroes like *Mirladeva* were as much real as the *Rishi* and the metaphysician. The *Nagaraka* was not a melancholy or meditative Hindu; he did not fly away from life; he was not innocent of beauty; he enjoyed the fair of life and played his part in life's carnival.

The Hindu was not a life-scorner. To the Hindu idealist, life was an art to the beautiful realisation of which all arts and branches of learning contributed. Education was of the whole man. There should not be over-development of only one part of one's personality. *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha* were all harmonised in the noble Hindu life. Such life was no enemy to happiness. Kautilya emphatically says in his *Arthashastra* (I. 7.) that one ought

not to be without happiness.<sup>1</sup> In his famous description of Rama in the opening canto of the *Ayodhyakanda*, Valmiki says that Rama did enjoy but was not indolent.<sup>2</sup> Rama was very proficient in worldly affairs and knew the truth of *Dharma*, *Artha* and *Kama*.<sup>3</sup> The citizens of Ayodhya were righteous and pure in conduct, yet always joyous; they enjoyed and were not misers, yet they were not creatures of desire and avarice. They decked and were most comely, yet pure as saints in character.<sup>4</sup>

There was thus a harmonious life in which there was no excess on any side; a golden normality prevailed. It is an absurd criticism that a writer named Arthur Duncan makes in his *India in Crisis* that the climate of India is more suited to indulgence or contemplation than to stern discipline or action. Many writers consider the Hindu as capable only of the two extremes of hedonism and asceticism. H. D. Griswold says in his article on *Indian Pessimism* in the *Encyclopaedia of Ethics and Religion* that in India there is no healthy volition, volition which alone can lead to good life on earth, that there are in India only excesses of thinking and feeling, philosophy and indulgence, monasticism and hedonism. He illustrates his criticism with *Bhartrhari's Vairagya* and *Sringara Satakas*. But this poor writer forgets that the first the *Nitisataka* of *Bhartrhari* is on right and healthy

<sup>1</sup> न निस्तुखस्त्यात् ।

<sup>2</sup> सुखतन्त्रो न चालसः । II. 1. 27.

<sup>3</sup> धर्मं कामार्थतत्त्वज्ञः । लौकिके समयाचारे कृतकल्पो विशारदः । II. 1. 22.

<sup>4</sup> तस्मिन्पुरवरे हृष्टाः धर्मात्मानो बहुश्रुताः । कामी वा न कदर्यो वा ॥ महर्षय इवामलाः नाकुण्डली नामुकुटी नाखण्डी नात्यभोगवान् । etc



volition. That the ideal of Hinduism is always the achievement of the normal and healthy mean, the purifying of the ore of life and accepting it as gold, was very well demonstrated by Prof. M. Hiriyanna of Mysore in his Presidential Address to the philosophical section of the recent oriental conference held at Mysore. The learned professor contrasted the Buddhistic ideal of 'runaway' and the Hindu ideal of 'live-it-well,' illustrating his point with the two poets Asvaghosha and Kalidasa and their respective poems, the *Buddhacarita* and the *Kumarasambhava*. In an address to the American Oriental Society, (1926, T. A. O. S. Vol. 46), Prof. W. E. Clark of the university of Chicago corrects some misconceptions about India and says that Hindu life struck a balance between the claims of *Kama*, *Artha* and *Moksha* and that India has been more successful than the West in striking the balance between *Pravritti* and *Nivritti*.

The life of renunciation and pure spiritual pursuit was for a few. The general rule was the normal life of a householder. There is hardly any Sanskrit authority which does not mention that the stage of the householder, the *Grihasthasrama*, is the best. The *Mahabharata* says that there is no epic to equal its own greatness even as there is nothing to equal the *Grihasthasrama*. Sriharsa says in his *Naishadkiya Charita* that like India among countries, *Garhasthya* is best among *Ashramas*. In the same verse, Sriharsa makes *Damayanti* prefer this world to the other world which the gods offer her.<sup>5</sup>

All the *smritis* praise the *Grihasthasrama*. This body and this world have been considered as the primary means and place for one to work out one's *karma*. To live here, discharging one's duties righteously, in the reverent spirit of co-operating in God's work, offering Him each work as if it were the flower of one's worship,<sup>6</sup> is the great *Karma Yoga* that the Gita teaches. The *Isavasyopanishad* says—'Continuing to do one should wish to live for a hundred years.'<sup>7</sup> Krishna says in the *Bhagavata*: 'Remaining in this world, doing one's duty, sinless and pure, one attains pure knowledge and devotion to Me.'<sup>8</sup> Again there is the following text which assures Moksha even for the householder who has *Tattvajnana* and other good qualities.<sup>9</sup>

The critics however confuse and wrongly attribute the monkishness of Jainism and Buddhism to Hinduism. Those who had purely spiritual yearning were given full scope in Hinduism to walk the path of *Sannyasa*. But the *Adhikarins* and candidates for it form but a small part of the vast populace. To forget this is to forget the large scope of Hinduism and its very genius.

The ordinary Hindu ideal was very normal. In fact, the Hindu idealist had the vision of a life of

तत्तास्मि पत्युर्वरिवस्ययाहं शर्मोभिकिर्मीरित-  
धर्मलिप्सुः ॥

<sup>5</sup> स्वकर्मेणा तमभ्यर्च्य ।

<sup>7</sup> कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेत् शतं समाः ।

<sup>8</sup> अस्मिन्लोके वर्तमानः स्वधर्मस्योऽनधः  
शुचिः ।

ज्ञानं विशुद्धमाप्नोति मद्भक्तिं वा मदिच्छया

11 × 1 20. 11.

<sup>9</sup> देवान्नरतः तत्त्वज्ञाननिष्ठोऽतिथिप्रियः ।

भद्रां कृत्वा ददद्द्वयं गृहस्थोऽपि हि मुच्यते॥

<sup>5</sup> वर्षेषु यद्भारतमार्यधुर्याः स्तुवन्ति गार्हस्थ्य-  
निवाभ्रमेषु ।

beautiful and healthy normality. He sought for a certain 'Samatva' or harmony in his personality and in its all round unfoldment. He strove for that ideal of moderation, *Yukta-haravihara Yuktachesta*'—of the Gita. Hardly can one be considered to have understood Hindu culture or literature if he mistakes the Hindu as a dull-pulsed, gustoless individual. There was no pessimism, no melancholy, clouding his face. The ideal god which his art-canon described is one always beaming with smile—*Mandasmitasmera*, *Prasannavadana*. When he prayed to that deity in his prayers, he asked for not only *Mukti* (liberation) but *Bhukti* (enjoyment) also. 'May we see a hundred autumns'<sup>10</sup> and so on he prayed. "To obtain all, for the success of everything"<sup>11</sup>—so ended every *karma*.

Further, the doctrine of *Karma* need not mean all that the missionary theoretically draws out of it. The illusory nature of the world belongs as a tenet to only one system of Hindu philosophy. There are other realistic, theistic and ethical schools of thought. The idea of the vanity of earthly glories and divine discontent are feelings not in any way peculiar to the Hindu idealist. Lastly, even the realisation of Brahman is to be enjoyed only in this world.<sup>12</sup> Philosophy is not a way of not living; it is a way of living.

To say that to the Hindu, enjoyment and life are not recent British imports or missionary administrations is not to say that the Hindus were a race of hedonists, materialists, Bohemians or Epicureans. As pointed

out before, there was the idealism of the harmony of *Trivarga* or the harmonious blending of ethics, earning and enjoyment in one's life. Enjoyment and acquisition (*Kama* and *Artha*) were always regulated by *Dharma*, righteousness. Those who are motivated only by enjoyment and only by acquisition are both condemned. Rama tells Lakshmana: "He who is after material gain only is to be scorned: so also to be essentially pleasure-seeking is not praiseworthy."<sup>13</sup>

Both the *Arthacharya* and the *Kamacharya*, namely *Kautilya* and *Vatsyayana* respectively insist on *Artha* and *Kama* being enjoyed without the violation of *Dharma*. In the very opening, *Kautilya* insists on sense-control for the prince and forbids sexual lawlessness, cupidity and cruelty. Hinduism denies not the joys of life; it only wants to draw up a limit and a method for the enjoyment. Says poet Nilakantha Diksita in his *Santivilasa*: "Wife, sons, bed, food, ornaments and clothing, and other objects of human longing of a similar nature—who says 'nay' to these things; but there is only a condition laid down in enjoying these."<sup>14</sup> And the Lord Himself blesses all desires that are consistent with *Dharma*.<sup>15</sup>

Neither for the individual nor for the State does Hinduism lay *Kama*

<sup>10</sup> पश्येम शरदश्शतम् ।

<sup>11</sup> सर्वस्याप्त्यै सर्वस्य जित्यै ।

<sup>12</sup> अत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते ।

<sup>13</sup> द्वेष्यो भवत्यर्थपरो हि लोके कामात्मता खल्वपि न प्रशस्ता ।

<sup>14</sup> दाराः पुत्राः शयनमशनं भूषणाच्छादने वा यच्छेदक्षं पुमभिलषितं तेषु माशाब्दिकः कः। किन्न्वेतेषां भवति नियमः सेवने कोऽपि कोऽपि द्वेषस्तस्मिन्नपि भवति चेत्तत्र वक्ता कृतान्तः ।

<sup>15</sup> धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ।

or *Artha* as the main impulse. To encroach upon another's possessions is to violate *Dharma*.<sup>16</sup> Personal or national imperialism is condemned. When Jabali tempts Rama with a forceful plea for *Artha*, out comes Rama, condemning that State and its king who have converted their *Dharma* into a crime, who in their reckless pursuit of more and more have become low, wicked and sinful. Such kingship and rule, Rama says, he will cast away.<sup>17</sup>

Of that great normal life in which *Trivarga* found a harmonious expression, in which there was *Pravrtti* (action) in *Nivrtti* (renunciation) and *Nivrtti* in *Pravrtti*, in which the man lived and enjoyed but did not transgress the bounds of *Dharma*,

<sup>16</sup> मा गृधः कस्यस्त्वित धनम् ।

<sup>17</sup> चात्र धर्ममहं त्यज्ये ह्यधर्मे धर्मसंहितम् ।  
क्षुद्रेर्नृशंसैः पापैश्च सेवितं पापकर्मभिः ॥

what greater ideal for us can there be than the Avatar who incarnated to show how noble man could live? For such a life, one should be an 'adept' a *Kusala* in *Karma*, a *Vichak-sana*, one knowing and decisive of what to do and what not to do and capable of distinguishing *Dharma* from *Dharmabhasa* (semblance of *Dharma*) and *Karma* from *Karmabhasa* (semblance of *Karma*). This ideal was embodied in Rama. He acted decisively at all critical situations, being superior in his wisdom over Jabalis and Vasisthas. Rama says of himself to Jabali : content in my pleasures, I am conducting my life's course without deceit, with faith in the eternal values of Truth and Right and with thorough discrimination of what is fit to be done and what is unfit.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> सन्तुष्टपञ्चवर्गोऽहं लोकयात्रां प्रवर्तये ।  
अकुह श्रद्धानश्च कार्याकार्यविवक्षणः ॥

## THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE INFINITE

By Sister Devamata

[Sister Devamata is of American nationality. She is one of the ardent supporters of the Vedanta Movement in America and has devoted her life to it. She has also written several books dealing with the theory and practice of religion. In the present article she gives a brief exposition of the discipline one must undergo in order to expand from individual to infinite consciousness.]

**T**HE Egyptian pyramids have taught us that the most enduring structure is one broad at the base, narrowing toward the sky. In such manner should man construct his life, —at the foundation line, wide enough to include all humanity; at the apex, God alone.

No man can afford to live wholly to himself. If he close his door on mankind, he will find that he has shut himself out and stands a beggar at his own threshold. We exile our-

selves, when we withdraw from the human family and lead our life as isolated units. We are like soldiers marching alone, without the dignity and protection of an army.

The more extended the unity among men, the stronger is the social body. Forming alliance with a limited group only,—with country or community, does not suffice. It deprives us of a vaster background and the benefits of a wider association. Substituting one group for the whole, or breaking

the whole into groups, is the cause of the clashes and conflicts which rend the world. Out of it grows the illusive belief that between group and group there exist contending interests and rival advantages. The effort of one group to expand at the expense of another creates also a forced distribution of resources and disturbs the balance of the universe.

Through uncounted ages Nature has been striving to lift men from the animal to the human plane. Shall we betray her effort and continue to prey one upon the other? The human plane calls for cohesiveness, the desire to share and to include. When we manifest less generous tendencies, we are reverting to our brute instincts. Evolution works on the whole, not on selected parts; and as the strength of a bridge must be measured by the weakest girder, not by the strongest, so must the progress of the human race be counted not by the vanguard, but by those who lag. We move forward as a vast unit and cannot neglect or harm the least creature in that unit without retarding our own progress and the progress of all mankind. If we advance or profit at the cost of a fellow-being, we share in the injury we inflict. "Everything a man doth, be it good or evil, he doeth it to himself," we read in an early Italian record.

How may we gain this sense of universal kinship? We cannot hope to contact all the peoples of the earth or acquaint ourselves concerning them. Confucius may say, "The men of the four seas are our brothers," or St. Paul that we are all children of one God, but how are we to apprehend and feel it? By expanding our consciousness. We must move gradually up the scale of think-

ing and feeling,—from self-consciousness to group-consciousness, from group-consciousness to universal consciousness, and from an all-inclusive consciousness of the universe to a consciousness of the Infinite or God. Thus we reach the apex of the pyramid.

It is not a new course that we follow. Nature marked it out for man at the outset of his evolution. She has led him from individual to family, from family to tribe, from tribe to nation, from nation to internationalism, and to-day she is calling to him to break down the last barrier and pass on to an all-encompassing world-vision.

Consciousness has no limit of distance or area. It can circle the earth as swiftly and easily as it can travel to a neighbour's door. It becomes therefore a great uniting power. When an act of heroism or an exalted achievement is flashed from hemisphere to hemisphere there is something in every man's heart and mind which responds. A sense of kinship is awakened and mankind is more united because of that act or achievement. All expressions of moral and spiritual valor foster world-consciousness and bind men together. Every noble life, every generous impulse, every selfless sacrifice, contributes to it. We do not need to touch the hand or hear the voice of a fellow-being to be related to him. When we envelope him with our thought, we contact him. This holds equally for the group and for all humanity.

As we pass from plane to plane of consciousness, we must leave no gaps, no empty spaces. Each plane must form a solid foundation for the plane that follows. Each must be thoroughly tested by living. "No virtue

is to be trusted until it has been put into practice," the mystic, John Tauler, declares. We cannot grasp the import or fulfill the obligations of the group without first doing our part in the family. We cannot take our place worthily in the family, if our individual life is not nobly lived. We must grow strong in the lesser relation before we can prove adequate in the larger. It is not possible to answer the higher call, if we refuse to hear the one now sounding in our ears.

Our whole nature must be alive and active in this passage from the individual to the Infinite. Every moral and spiritual trait, every faculty, every finer impulse, will be needed. There are, however, certain qualities on which special accent must be laid. The first of these is sincerity. If we are not genuine, if our aspiration is mere theory, our effort will lack the driving-power necessary to carry forward and we shall remain static. Our thought will not broaden, rather will it shrink and shrivel. We must set out on our course with confidence, resolution and earnest conviction, if we would reach our goal.

Patience and endurance are also essential elements in our effort. The way is long and often rough and steep. Nature makes the struggle proportionate to the end to be attain-

ed, that we may develop the strength required for the larger vision. We cannot approach God wearily or in doubt and complaining. We cannot stand before Him, timid and questioning. We must come to Him with a valorous heart, a confident mind, a submissive will and an undaunted spirit.

Above all we must be self-forgetting. To think of our self or to assert our self is to narrow the area of our consciousness and cut ourself off from the whole. We cannot rest our thought on this finite self and move toward the Infinite. It is not possible to contract and to expand at the same time. Expansion implies merging the lesser in the greater.

So long as man is imprisoned in the little self, he cannot realize lasting happiness. There is an inherent tendency in his nature to break down all barriers, to go beyond all horizon-lines. Gratifying his ambitions and desires, his vanity and greed, will not satisfy him. He will continue to reach out for a larger attainment. He will still covet the unknown. His unrest will not cease until his individual consciousness has found its completion in infinite consciousness. Then his door will be open to the universe, no living being will be a stranger to him, and God will be his companion.

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## WORDS OF CHINESE WISDOM

*By Sri Sivasula*

[Several thoughts given below are sparkling gems of wisdom, and provide excellent themes for meditation.]

**T**HESE maxims of China are compiled from Tao-Teh-King, the famous work of Laotze. Laotze is the founder of Taoism, an ancient faith of pre-Buddhistic origin, and Tao-Teh-King is the Veda of this Chinese religion. This sacred book is said to embody the spiritual experiences of the Chinese race and has been commented upon by as many as sixty-one writers of the country. Its popularity and profundity are evidenced by the large number of commentaries extant on it. Perhaps no scripture that exists can boast of such a speciality. A glance into the following ideas of Laotze would show that they are now as fresh and impressive as when they were uttered more than twenty-five centuries ago. It is a striking testimony that they were born of highest spiritual realisations. These golden sayings of this Chinese philosopher contain nuggets of truths having universal appeal and application.

It is only those who are selfless that esteem life at its right value.

A diversity of light tends to blind the eyes. A diversity of sounds tends to deafen the ears. A diversity of flavours tends to dull the taste. A diversity of actions tends to excite the desires. A diversity of guests tends to corrupt the intentions. That is why the self-controlled man closes the doors of the senses and dwells in the Inner Life.

Prevent evil before it appears :  
secure order before disorder ensues.

But men, too anxious for results, fail on the eve of success. Regard the end as you regard the beginning, and you will not fail in your undertakings.

There is no greater sin than uncurbed desire. There is no greater evil than discontent. There is no greater fault than greed of gain. But the plenitude of contentment is the fulfilment of every desire.

Without leaving his threshold a man may know the universe. Without looking through his window a man may see the heart of Heaven.

He who raises himself on tip-toe cannot stand firm. He who straightens his legs cannot walk. He who asserts himself does not convince. He who boasts of himself has no merit. He who glorifies himself does not impress. These things are to Truth what refuse and remnants of food are to the body.

Man becomes old through excessive striving. That is why the sage avoids the extremes of excessive personal effort. Since he does not strive, no one in the world can strive against him.

To know that we are ignorant is a high achievement. To regard ignorance as knowledge is a defect. To feel the pain of this defect is the beginning of its removal.

To teach without words ; to benefit without action ;—how few in the world attain to this ?

To walk in goodness leaves no disfiguring tracks. To speak in goodness

leaves no cause for dissension. To plan in goodness needs no calculation. To guard the door of goodness needs no locks and bars, yet none can open it. To bind in goodness needs no cords, yet none can pull it asunder.

By ceasing to strive, we overcome strife ; by ceasing to possess and crave for love, we gain love ; by ceasing our endeavours to become learned and wise, we find Truth ; by ceasing attachments to the outer beauty we gain the vision of the Inner Beauty.

The wise men of old were cautious, as if fording a stream in the winter. They were reluctant, as if fearing to give offence. They were deferential as if dealing with strangers. They were self-effacing like snow beneath the sun. They were unpretentious like unpolished wood. They were lowly like the expansive valley.

He who knows others is discerning, but he who knows himself is enlightened. One who conquers others has strength but one who conquers oneself is prepotent. One who has wealth is wealthy but one who has contentment is really rich.

Heaviness is the foundation of lightness. Stillness is mastery over motion. Therefore the wise man in his daily intercourse departs not from inner gravity and repose. By lack of seriousness men lose heart.

He who possesses Truth in its fullness is like a little child. Poisonous insects will not sting him ; wild beasts will not chase him ; birds of prey will not strike him. Though his bones are soft and his muscles weak, yet his grasp is firm and sure.

Supreme Truth is very straight, but how much do men love the by-paths.

By blending heart and mind in united singleness of purpose it is possible to reach the Indivisible.

Esteem your highest attainment as incomplete, its utility will remain unimpaired. Esteem your greatest fullness as emptiness, it will never be depleted. Know your highest wisdom as foolishness.

As movement overcomes cold, as stillness overcomes heat, so he who has purity and serenity becomes a model in the world.

Hold fast to the Great Truth and all men will come to you of themselves. They will come and receive no hurt, finding rest and peace in the great calm.

To quicken, but not to own ; to actuate, but not to act ; to raise but not to rule is the way of Truth.

The wise man does not lay up treasures ; his riches are within. The more he spends his resources for others, the more he increases his own store.

What is he who takes hold of the inner life and knows the secret of its hidden springs ? No power can strike the inner life ; no power can hold it ; no power can penetrate it.

To know contentment is to fear no shame. To know how to be still is to avoid destruction.

Courage carried to one extreme is the boldness that leads to death. Courage carried to the other extreme preserves life by self-restraint.

Good words through Truth are fraught with potency. Noble deeds through Truth are wrought with never-failing efficiency.

He who neglects the inner Light is lost in body's darkness. He who follows the Light-of Heaven ever reflects its radiance.

Moderate thy speech and thus attain spontaneity. A gust of wind does not outlast the morning ; a squaller of rain does not outlast the day.

It is better to withhold than to fill to overflowing : it is better to refrain than to push to the extreme. Continual excess wears away the keenest instrument.

He who fills the void, knows the nature of Eternity. The highest man never magnifies himself.

He who knows the Truth, tells It not : he who tells it knows It not.

He alone who is free from earthly passions can perceive the mystery of the Unmanifested One.

The nameless simplicity brings absence of desire ; absence of desire

brings stillness ; thus would the world become perfect from within itself.

The self-controlled man dwells in the balance which is beyond the action of the contraries ; he teaches without words ; he inspires to action, but appears not to act ; he produces but does not possess ; he brings his work to perfection but does not claim reward.

The root of dignity is in humility : the foundation of the exalted is in loneliness.

Thirty spokes unite in the hub of a wheel ; but the usefulness of the wheel depends on the empty inner centre. Moulded clay is fashioned into a vessel, but the usefulness of the vessel depends on the empty inner centre.

## SWETASWATARA UPANISHAD

*By Swami Thyagisananda*

युजे वां ब्रह्म पूर्वे नमोभिर्विभोक्त एतु परयेव सूरैः ।

शृण्वन्तु विश्वे अमृतस्य पुत्रा आ ये दिव्यानि धामानि तस्युः ॥

सूरैः = of the wise पयि = according to the way एव = only वां = you two नमोभिः = by meditation पूर्वे = the ancient ब्रह्म = Brahma युजे = merge विभोक्तः = the glorious one एतु = may manifest विरवे = all अमृतस्य = of immortality पुत्राः = sons शृण्वन्तु = may hearken ये = who दिव्यानि = celestial धामानि = regions आतस्युः = occupy.

Following only in the footsteps of the wise,<sup>1</sup> merge<sup>2</sup> you both<sup>3</sup> in the Ancient<sup>4</sup> Brahman by continued meditation. May the Glorious One manifest itself ! May the sons of Immortal Bliss<sup>5</sup> hearken<sup>6</sup> to me—even they<sup>7</sup> who occupy celestial regions (5)

*Note.*—This verse treats of Samadhi and realisation by complete union and absorption in Brahman through meditation.

1. *The wise*—The men of realisation who initiates us in the methods of Sadhana. The Sruti seems to hint that only they are wise who have become one with the ultimate principle of the universe, and only such should be accepted as guides or gurus and not such as have stopped on the way. Otherwise it will be the same as the blind following the lead of the blind.



2. *Merge*—The reference here is to the Nirvikalpa or Asamprajnata or Nirbija Samadhi which is the culmination of spiritual practice or yoga, where all the modifications of the mind cease completely ; all thought vanishes, and the individual becomes one with the universal.

3. *Both*—The mind and the intellect which were hitherto serving as a screen, hiding the vision of the ultimate truth.

4. *Ancient*—Because Brahman existed before creation, i.e., before everything else came into existence.

5. *Sons of Immortal Bliss*—This shows that we are all entitled to immortal bliss as our birthright. It gives the lie direct to the view that we are all born sinners.

6. *Hearken*—Refers to the happy state of the mind of the realised man who is eager to share his bliss with others less fortunate.

7. *Even they, etc.*—Even those who have mounted the topmost rungs of the ladder of worldly prosperity and foolishly pride themselves as having achieved their life's goal are reminded that there is still something higher—their birthright of Immortal Bliss.

अमिर्यतामिमध्यने वायुर्यताधिरुच्यते ।

सोमो यत्रातिरिच्यते तत्र सजायते मनः ॥

अग्निः=fire यत्र=where अभिमध्यते=is churned out वायुः=air यत्र=where अधिरुच्यते=is controlled सोमः=soma juice यत्र=where अतिरिच्यते=overflows तत्र=there मनः=the mind सजायते=attains perfection.

Where fire<sup>1</sup> is churned out, where air<sup>2</sup> is controlled, where soma juice<sup>3</sup> overflows, there the mind attains perfection. (6)

*Note.*—This verse aims at a synthesis of the Jnana Yoga, Raja Yoga, and Karma Yoga, and presses them all into service for the realisation of the Ultimate Truth.

1. *Fire*—In Vedic symbology fire stands for intellectual knowledge in the form of ideas couched in language. This knowledge is churned out as a result of study and reflection and philosophical enquiry under the guidance of a competent teacher. Of the two pieces of wood used for producing fire in sacrifices, the upper one stands for the teacher (Guru) and the lower one for the disciple (Shisya), and the process of study is spoken of as 'churning out.' The whole line refers to Jnana Yoga in general. Cf. Bhagvata XI, V, 12. Cf. also Taaittiriya Up. T. 2 & 3.

2. *Air*—This represents Pranayama or the control of the vital functions, which is a practice peculiar to Raja Yoga as expounded by Patanjali. Hence this line refers to the practice of that Yoga.

3. *Soma*—The Soma juice used in Vedic sacrifice symbolises the exhilaration arising out of the pursuits of worldly enjoyments giving rise to a forgetfulness of one's higher nature and birth right of eternal bliss. Soma is said to overflow when the symbolic character of the Vedic sacrifice is transcended and ritual gives place to self-sacrifice, when work becomes unattached and is elevated to the rank of worship and service of God in man. This line therefore stands for Karma Yoga or the Yoga of active self-sacrifice.

सवित्रा प्रसवेन जुषेत ब्रह्म पूर्णम् ।

यत्र योनिं कृण्वसे न हि ते पूर्वमक्षिपत् ॥

यत्र=where योनिं=the source कृण्वसे=you destroy ते=your पूर्व=the results of past actions न=do not अक्षिपत्=cause trouble (च=and) (तत्—that) पूर्वं=the ancient ब्रह्म=the Brahman प्रसवेन=through the Creator or First Cause सवित्रा=through the Immanent Soul जुषेत=should be devoted to.

Attaining whom, you destroy the source,<sup>1</sup> and are no more troubled by the results of past actions<sup>2</sup>—to that Ancient Brahman be thou devoted, through<sup>3</sup> the Prime Cause, the Immanent Soul.(7)

*Note.*—This verse refers to Bhakti Yoga for completing the picture of synthesis of Yogas referred to in the previous verse.

1. *Source*—Here refers to the mind which gives rise to the phenomenal world. This is finally destroyed only when the Absolute Brahman is realised and the Sadhaka becomes one with It.

2. *The results of past actions*—The word Poortha means charitable acts such as the construction of wells, tanks, gardens, rest-houses, etc., for public benefit. It is generally used in conjunction with the word Ishta which denotes acts of sacrifice. These stand for all meritorious actions leading to heaven. Here it refers to the accumulated results of all past actions in general. The virtuous actions are specially referred to for showing that even they lead to re-birth, and should be transcended before the final release from Samsara, by becoming one with the Absolute.

3. *Through, etc.*—The Absolute is beyond thought and speech and cannot be the object of devotion. Devotion moreover requires the duality of Bhakta and Bhagavan. We have therefore to approach the unity of the Absolute through some perfect form conceived by the intellect. The best possible form of devotion is that of the Immanent Soul conceived as the First Cause—whose presence is felt by all devotees in their hearts.

The next few verses refer to some of the details of Yoga practice.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

(1) *The Message of Our Master.* (2) *Spiritual Talks : Both by the first disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.* Price Rs. 1-4 & 1-12 and pp. 230 & 390 respectively. Pocket size. Advaita Ashrama, 4, Willington Lane, Calcutta. Can be had also at the Vedanta Kesari Office, Mylapore, Madras.

The first book contains a collection of 22 short essays by some of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna—Swamis Vivekananda, Brahmananda, Premananda, Trigunatita, Turiyananda, Saradananda, Ramakrishnananda and Sivananda, falling

under five topical headings, viz., *What is Religion ? What is Spiritual Practice ? Preparation for Higher Life, The Need of a Guru and The four Great Paths.* The authors of these writings were all dazzling examples of intense spiritual living. Most of them did not at all care to leave any document of their spiritual strivings or counsels. Of this collection, a few very solitary and rare productions such as *Brahmacharya* by Swami Trigunatita *Truthfulness* by Swami Premananda, *Guru* by Swami Brahmananda and *Pranayama* by

Swami Shivananda are too precious to have been left to remain in the limbo of a monthly. Although the contributors are various, the book as a whole has a distinct unity and coherence, because the underlying theme is the same. Self-surrender as well as self-knowledge, the goal of life as well as the path to it, the way of worship as well as the nature of the worshipped are all explained here clearly and concisely with a winning freshness and vigour.

The second volume records the conversations of the Holy Mother and Swamis Brahmananda, Premananda, Turiyananda, Saradananda and Sivananda, noted down by some of their close associates and attendants. About three quarters of the bulk of this volume is taken up by Swami Turiyananda's conversations which are unrivalled for their pithiness, spiritual acumen, sound practicality and thorough understanding of the needs of the spiritual aspirant. The occasion for these talks being mostly the doubts and difficulties of the persons who have taken to spiritual life, they are of great assistance to all that seek help in their spiritual striving. The hardships and failings of a life of inner discipline are past the imagination of all that shirk an attempt for its mastery. Hints thrown out by texts and scriptures are often bald and lacking in definiteness and warmth. But words of advice garnered in the pages of such books, coming as they do from persons who have traversed the arduous path of the spirit, would surely settle many a doubt in the mind of the disciple and infuse enthusiasm and new hope. A telling directness, a profound simplicity, a ring of actuality, a warmth and glow of life and an admirable freedom from second-hand erudition make these two compilations attractively useful. The charming get-up with the coloured ribbon as page-mark and the general typographical excellence and beautiful illustrations bear eloquent testimony to the taste and discretion of the publishers.

**The Holy Quran : By Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B. Published by Dar-ul-Kutub-Islamia, Ahmadiyya Buildings, Lahore. Crown 8 vo. Pages CXVI & 631. Price, paper bound, Rs. 2-8.**

The book under review is a new edition of Mr. Muhammad Ali's larger work

with Arabic text, translation and elaborate notes in English. The general reader will welcome the new edition with the original size considerably reduced by the omission of the Arabic text and the abridgment of the notes. The translator has also added a new introduction wherein he gives a valuable exposition of the essentials of Islam and useful guidance for the study of the holy book.

Among the great scriptures of the world the Quran has the uniqueness of being not only a book of spiritual guidance and inspiration but the source of law and the code of daily conduct for its millions of followers. In these days of rapid social and political changes, its importance in the latter respect may dwindle both due to march of ideas and novelty of situations, but one may confidently assert that as long as man feels the call of the Beyond that is within, he will turn to it for the enrichment of his faith and a guaranty of his intuitions. For, its note of trust and faith in a Supreme Intelligence and Will is uniform and unwavering ; its vision of a law of righteousness governing the destinies of individuals and nations never makes compromise with parochial considerations ; and its scheme of spiritual discipline, consisting in resignation to the Divine Will and universal charity to all beings, has a simplicity and naturalness, a universality and non-dogmatic turn which no spiritual aspirant can fail to notice. The misconceptions about the Quran among non-Muslims are innumerable. These have their origin mainly in the unedifying conduct of ignorant and fanatical Muslims, in the misrepresentations of interested critics, and in the incapacity of both Muslims and non-Muslims to disentangle the essential teachings of the scripture from what is purely local and transient. But to one who can rise above these limitations, the Quran can transmit an enlightened faith in the One God of the Universe who combines in himself power with beneficence, mercy with justice and knowledge with action, and convey a sense of creatureliness and utter dependence on the mighty yet beneficent Power for whom the unnumbered world systems are only like tiny particles of sand. It can give him valuable guidance in both spiritual and civic life and teach him how to live with heart to God

and hands to work. The non-Muslim world will be grateful to Mr. Muhammed Ali for giving them access to this valuable

scripture by this cheap edition of his translation, noted alike for its accuracy and lucidity.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Sri Ramakrishna Centenary in London

The chief meeting in connection with the Ramakrishna Centenary Celebrations in England was held on Friday the 27th of March at the Hall of the Theosophical Society in Gloucester Place, under the chairmanship of Sir Francis Younghusband.

At the outset, messages of sympathy which had been received from the President of the Ramakrishna Mission in India, Marquess of Zetland and Mr. C. F. Andrews were read out by Mr. Kanti Ghosh, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Centenary Committee. "I am interested," observes Lord Zetland in his message, "... in what you tell me of the arrangements which you have made for the celebration of the centenary of the birth of Sri Ramakrishna in this country. I carry with me very pleasant recollections of my visit to ... Belur Math... and I shall be glad if you will convey to the meeting... my good wishes. I trust that the philanthropic work of the Mission in India continues to make progress." Rev. C. F. Andrews regretting his inability to be present in the meeting makes the following statement in the course of his letter: "My admiration for the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Mission is very deep indeed, and I have often worked with its members in relief work during times of flood or cholera or scarcity bordering on famine. They have always rendered devoted and loving service to the poor. I have also visited the Ramakrishna Mission in America, where it has carried a spiritual message into the heart of an overburdened world and 'civilisation, where untoward things have grown too strong for the silent working of God's spirit in man. Their members have shown an unselfishness and love for humanity which has won my heart."

The Chairman in his opening remarks recalled how when he was a young man in India, Sri Ramakrishna was living near Calcutta, but that he had never had the

good fortune of ever meeting him face to face. But he knew one person at least who had seen the Master, and that was the late Maharani of Cooch Behar. The Maharani had told the speaker that she was present at the first meeting of Sri Ramakrishna with her father, the great reformer Keshub Chunder Sen, and though she was too young at that time to react to the spiritual force of the Master, she remembered how her father, ever since that first meeting, held Ramakrishna in great reverence, and what a close bond of mutual love existed between those two great souls. Sir Francis went on to observe that the Master's message "as many faiths, so many paths" is the greatest of all messages that they had received from the East during the last century. Sir Francis laid emphasis on the peculiar character of the message in that it did not advocate mere tolerance, but that it insisted on acceptance of the tenets of other faiths in their entirety, and Sri Ramakrishna, through his spiritual practices, had proved that all religious paths, if sincerely followed, led, in their ultimate consummation, to the same realisation. It was a message which was destined to do a great deal of good to the modern world. Mrs. Edith Hunter, of the Friends of India Society, in a very interesting speech dwelt on the realisation of Sri Ramakrishna and his message to the world. She observed that the problems of the modern world would be automatically solved if they would only follow the teachings of the great Master. It was not for the first time that messages of peace had come from the East, but that Ramakrishna's message interpreted by his great disciple Vivekananda had this peculiarity that it offered a solution on the spiritual plane by advocating the worship of divinity in man. That, in the speaker's opinion, was the only remedy for the fever-stricken world at the present moment. Dr. Har Dayal, who followed next, traced the trend of modern European civilization from the days of the

Renaissance and the Reformation which had culminated in Individualism in its most pernicious form, the result of which could be seen in the unstable condition of Europe today with its hedonism, with its greed and its love of money and power. Sri Ramakrishna stood out against all these. He insisted on doing away with *ahankar*, "I-ness," before one could hope to attain the ultimate bliss. His teachings were never more needed than in the present day when the whole world seemed to be standing on the edge of a precipice as it were. In his life, Ramakrishna had proved how complete and blissful life could be if one were only free from *ahankar*.

Swami Avyaktananda, the last speaker, dwelt at length on the achievements of the Western civilization with its ideal of humanism. While paying tribute to the humanising force of that civilization, he said the path had led to a "cul-de-sac" and it was here that the light which Ramakrishna had lit would discover a new path which would lead the world to the state of blissfulness. He would not undervalue the greatness of the material civilization of the West, but he would insist that the time had come for its divinization by the acceptance of the spiritual ideals of the East. The blending of the two ideals would transform the world and he believed that it would be consummated in no distant future through the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

The Chairman in his concluding remarks said that he felt proud to have had an opportunity of paying his tribute to Sri Ramakrishna by associating himself wholeheartedly with his Centenary Celebration. The West was now prepared to receive spiritual messages from the East and especially from Sri Ramakrishna who was not only the greatest spiritual genius of India in the present age, but also one of the greatest men of all times. The Hall was packed full and the large gathering dispersed late at night after a vote of thanks to the Chair proposed by Mr. Henry Polak.

#### Sri Ramakrishna Centenary at Portland, Oregon

The Centenary Celebration of Sri Ramakrishna was opened on Saturday, March 28, at 8-30 p.m., with the presentation of a

playlet called "The Light from The Beyond," in the Commandery Room of the Masonic Temple, before an enthusiastic and respectable gathering of more than three hundred people. The play, in two Acts and three Tableaux of the goddess Saraswati, Mohammed and the Madonna, was adapted by Swami Devatmananda, from the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. This sublime subject was presented in the picturesque and colorful setting of oriental costumes and religious chants.

On Sunday, March 29, at 11 o'clock in the morning, a devotional service was held, in the Chapel of the Vedic Temple, 1206 N.W. 25 Ave., when Swami Devatmananda addressed the full hall on "Sri Ramakrishna, the God-Man." It was preceded by a period of silent meditation and appropriate musical program.

At 6-30 p.m., a banquet was held in the Banquet Hall of the Masonic Temple, when Hindu dinner was served to more than one hundred people. The Memorial meeting was promptly started at 7-45 p.m., when more people began crowding in the hall. The Toast Master, Mr. Ralph Thom, of the Bank of California, called the meeting to order with a few appropriate words explaining the purpose of the gathering. He then introduced Dr. Norman F. Coleman, ex-President of the Reed College, who spoke eloquently on "Our Debt to India." Dr. G. B. Noble, of the same college, then spoke on "A Western View of Sri Ramakrishna." Swami Devatmananda was finally called upon to address the gathering. He spoke on "Sri Ramakrishna, and God-Intoxication." The talks were interspersed with musical numbers, vocal and instrumental, both presented by noted artists. Floral offerings, including one hundred red roses, added charm and grace to the place; and a large painting of Sri Ramakrishna prominently displayed was the centre of attraction.

On Thursday, April 2, a dinner reception was given to more than 30 members and friends of the Society, at 6 o'clock, in the hall of the Vedic Temple. The Swami prepared special Hindu dishes for the occasion. It was followed by music and other entertainments. On Sunday April 5, at 11 o'clock in the morning, the regular Ser-

vice was held in the Chapel of the Vedic Temple, when Swami Devatmananda spoke on "Sri Ramakrishna, His Spiritual Practices." A special feature of the musical program was a song composed for the occasion and dedicated to Sri Ramakrishna. In the evening, at 8 p.m., the Swami gave an illustrated talk, in the Corinthian Room of the Masonic Temple, on "The History of the Hindu Religion in Pictures" with the help of lantern slides. This graphic and thrilling presentation was immensely enjoyed by the whole audience that filled the hall.

As a permanent Memorial to Sri Ramakrishna, the newly-acquired Retreat named after him, will be dedicated, at a later date.

**Sri Ramakrishna Centenary in Providence, U.S.A.**

A Committee for the celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Centenary in America had been formed during the winter. It comprised, besides the American Swamis, of such outstanding figures as Professor William E. Hocking of Harvard University, Rev. Ivan Lee Holt, President of the Federation of Churches of Christ, Rev. Frederick B. Fisher, President of the Council of Free Churches of America, Rev. Jabex Sunderland, Professor Franklin Edgerton, Head of the American Oriental Society, Professor Millar Burrows, President of the American School of Oriental Research, Rabbi Israel Lazardon and others.

The celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birth-centenary was opened early on Friday, February 21st at 7-30 a.m., over the radio when Swami Akhilananda, speaking for the Ministers' Morning Devotions, gave a talk on the Spiritual Experiences of Sri Ramakrishna. That afternoon at 3 the Swami, speaking over a different radio station, read to the invisible public the message of Swami Vivekananda on Sri Ramakrishna, and spoke on Sri Ramakrishna and Future Civilization.

On Sunday, February 23rd a large gathering of about 300 came together at the Plantations Club, a big auditorium in the centre of Providence, to hear ministers of different religions speak on mysticism. An unusual spirit of harmony and good-will toward one another and toward Sri Ramakrishna could be noticed among the ministers. After music Swami Akhilananda

opened the meeting by reading to all the message of good cheer from Swami Akhandanandaji. A Catholic monk, Father Chandler, struck a high spiritual note by his beautiful exposition of the stages of divine love as portrayed in the life of St. Thomas Aquinas showing the attainment of God to be the highest human goal. This was followed by a very interesting account by Rabbi Braude of the charitable life of Rabbi Israel, the Master of Good-name. Rev. Ralph Harpole depicted practical mysticism in the Protestant Church from the life of Horace Bushnell. An entertaining note was then brought in by Rev. Frederick A. Wilmot's definition of mysticism, which he followed by a talk on Sri Ramakrishna bringing out with sympathetic understanding the idea of the harmony of religions. Swami Akhilananda then spoke on the mysticism of Sri Ramakrishna stressing the fact that man must realize God before he can become truly religious. The subject was drawn to a fitting close by Dr. Joachim Wach, of the Brown University, who wound up his speech with the brilliant remark that "mysticism denoted the harmony of man above his national and social barriers." On Monday four Swamis, Swami Akhilananda, Swami Vividishananda, Swami Gnaneshwarananda and Swami Paramananda were able to be together for the Birthday. The worship and rituals performed in the impressive Indian manner created an atmosphere of calm and sanctity which was enjoyed by all.

The following day, the message of Swami Akhandanandaji was broadcasted by the Press on the radio over the whole of the United States. This day a dinner for 100 was cooked in the Hindu fashion and served by Swami Akhilananda with the help of a number of friends. The number of guests, ministers, Rabbis, professors and friends, taxed the capacity of the house for dining, and late applications had to be rejected. The Hindu curries, new to many, were greatly relished. Then followed music and brief addresses on various phases of the life of Sri Ramakrishna by the five Swamis present and a few prominent American friends consisting of well-known ministers and University professors. On Wednesday again there was broadcasting of Swami Akhandanandaji's message

and a talk over the radio on Sri Ramakrishna by Swami Akhilananda, music, informal discussions and partaking of refreshments. Harmony of Religions was the topic of Swami Akhilananda over the radio on Friday, February 28th. In the evening there was another large public meeting at the Plantations Club. This time, four Swamis delivered lectures on Sri Ramakrishna and His influence which did much to spread acquaintance among the public.

The week of celebration proper ended on Sunday, March 1st. At a meeting in the evening, after a little violin music by Professor Henri J. Faucher accompanied by Mme. Marie B. Faucher and vocal music by Miss Ruth Webber accompanied by Mrs. Curry, Swami Akhilananda gave a lecture on India and Her Master illustrated by slides. On Sunday Swami Akhilananda again lectured on Sri Ramakrishna and Modern Problems.

The Celebration was thereafter carried to Philadelphia and to St. Louis by Swami Akhilananda, where, in both places, he delivered a number of special lectures on Sri Ramakrishna which interested and drew many people. The immediately noticeable result of the celebration was a greater number of letters from unknown people to the Swami, and an increased demand for the Swami as a speaker to various religious societies and gatherings of various kinds of ministers, of Men's and Women's Church Clubs including a Jewish women's group, of Young People's Church Societies, of Y.M.C.A. Boys groups and of Religious Conferences.

#### Sri Ramakrishna Thondar Sangham, Madras

A group of young men called together by the ideal of loving service has been able to meet at regular intervals and do some work of village uplift for the last four years with an increasing degree of success. The report for the year 1935 shows that an amount of Rs. 720-6-2 was collected through donations and subscriptions and spent in furtherance of the aims and purposes of the Association. The activities of the Association for the reported year consists of three night schools with 115 pupils mostly school-going, a miniature library for their use, supply of books and stationery for poor boys, conducting of bi-weekly Bhajanas, several festivals and Pujas, lantern lectures on moral and reli-

gious themes, a Co-operative Savings Bank, Panchayats, serving the in-patients of two hospitals with literature and gramophone songs, and the organising of a volunteer corps to prevent danger to crowds of women and children participating in the festivals at Kapalisvarar Temple. The Sangham, it is evident, deserves greater encouragement and co-operation to launch on larger schemes of uplift work among the poor and illiterate of the city.

#### FLOOD & FAMINE RELIEF WORK

**Khulna & Bankura :** Swami Madhavananda, the Acting Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, issues the following report and appeal :—The Mission started Famine Relief Work in Khulna District in 14 villages with a distribution of 28 mds. 33 srs. of rice among 508 recipients and in the last weekly distribution the figures have gone up to 31 villages, 1,643 recipients and 83 mds. 26 srs. of rice. The area will be further extended which will raise the total amount of rice distribution to 100 mds. In the Bankura District, where the work has recently been undertaken the third weekly distribution of 6 mds. 5 srs. was made from Jayrambati amongst 188 recipients belonging to 7 villages. Here also the work will have to be extended.

To continue the work already undertaken, the Mission will require at least Rs. 500 weekly. Our funds at present are insufficient and the continuation of the work depends entirely on the generous public. We therefore appeal again for liberal contributions, so that thousands may be saved from starvation and death. We cannot overestimate the seriousness of the situation, and we believe our appeal will reach every philanthropic heart in the country and find a ready response for this great cause.

**Arakan Flood Relief :** Our Flood Relief Work in South Arakan is also going on smoothly. Here also the work has been extended. Besides distribution of 940 mds. of rice among 13,207 recipients for the week ending 4th July, from four centres, the Mission workers have also been giving temporary medical relief and distributing building materials and clothing among the most deserving cases.

Contributions for this fund may kindly be sent to the address of The President, the Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, P. O. Howrah.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं प्रियं वा यदि वाप्रियं  
प्राप्तं प्राप्तमुपासीत हृदयेनापराजितः ।  
शोकस्थानसहस्राणि भयस्थानशतानि च  
दिवसे दिवसे मूढमाविशन्ति न पण्डितम् ।  
बुद्धिमन्तं दृढज्ञं शुश्रूषुमहद्भूतिम्  
शान्तं जितेन्द्रियं चापि शोको न स्पृशते नरम् ।  
यद्यत् त्यजति कामानां तत्सुखस्याभि पूर्यते  
कामानुसारी पुरुषः कामाननु विनश्यति ।  
यच्च कामसुखं लोको यच्च दिव्यं महत् सुखम्  
तृष्णाक्षयसुखस्यैते नार्हतः षोडशी कलाम् ।

Be it happy or miserable, pleasant or unpleasant, one ought to take up whatever that comes with a pushing, victorious mind. Innumerable grounds for grief and innumerable grounds for fear occur to an ignorant fool, but not to a wise man. Grief does not touch a man who is intelligent, provident, anxious to learn, free from egoism, calm, and controlled in senses. The more a man sheds his longings for enjoyments the more is he filled with pure joy. The person that pursues objects of lust dies a death at every endeavour. The joy that is derived in this world by fulfilling a sensuous desire and the great joy that is associated with the heavenly regions do not balance with even a sixteenth of the true happiness consequent upon the diminution of Thrishna or worldly hankering.

Mahabharatha, Santi Parva Ch. 173, Verses: 41, 42, 43, 46 & 47.



# SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

*Swami Saradananda*

[Swami Saradananda was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. "Sri Ramakrishna, the great Master" is a close translation of the Swami's well-known Bengali work which is one of the most authoritative and exhaustive sources of information on the life and teachings of the Master. In this section the triviality of occult powers is further emphasised and illustrated.]

*Girija—the other disciple of the  
Bhairavi.*

**T**HE Master told us about the wonderful power of Girija too. One day the Master went with him for a walk into the garden of Srijut Shambhu Mallik, situated near the Kali temple. Shambhu had much love for the Master and would feel great satisfaction if he could serve him in any way. He purchased a plot of land near the temple for 250 rupees and had a thatched house built on it for the Holy Mother. This house was used by her whenever she went to Dakshineswar to see the Master or to have bath in the sacred river Ganges. While residing in this house, she once had a severe attack of dysentery when Shambhu made all arrangements for her treatment and diet. Shambhu's devoted wife too would look upon the Holy Mother as a goddess and worship her as such whenever she happened to be there in connection with the celebration of some auspicious day. Moreover Shambhu bore all the expenses of the Master's frequent visits to Calcutta, and of the special diet that might be required occasionally for him. Of course, he got this privilege of serving the Master only after the demise of Mathuranath. The Master used to call Sambhu his second 'steward' and would go to his garden for a walk almost every day

and spend there a few hours with him conversing on religious topics.

*Girija's power of working miracles*

One day a very long time was spent in such conversation. The Master humorously remarked, "Devotees are like hemp-smokers. After enjoying a good puff at the pipe, one of the smokers passes it on to another. They cannot have complete satisfaction when they are alone and cannot pass on the pipe to a comrade. So also when devotees meet together one of them speaks feelingly on some religious topic for a time and then keeps silence to give a similar opportunity to others, himself listening to the speaker with great satisfaction." Shambhu, Girija and the Master went on enjoying the conversation that day, none knowing how time was passing on. Gradually it was an hour and a half after dusk, when the Master remembered that they should part. He took leave of Shambhu and along with Girija came out of the garden to proceed towards the temple. It was pitch dark then. The road could not be seen at all; and they began to stumble and lose direction at every step. Being wholly pre-occupied with the religious dialogue, they forgot it was dark, and did not take a lantern from Shambhu. What could be done now? With great difficulty the Master advanced somehow, groping for the way and supporting

himself on Girija's arm. Seeing that Girija said, "Well, brother, wait a minute. I shall show you light." With these words he stood with his back turned towards the Master and a long streak of light, emitted from his rear, showed the road up to the temple-gate quite distinctly, enabling the Master to walk that distance with perfect ease.

*The Master as the spiritual leader  
destroys the powers of Chandra  
and Girija*

In concluding the narrative the Master smilingly remarked, "But their powers did not last long. When they began to stay here (in his company), all those powers gradually disappeared." Being asked about the cause of the disappearance, the Master replied, "The Divine Mother withdrew their powers into this (showing his own body) for their own good. Thereafter their minds were free of these things and began to advance again Godwards."

*Supernatural powers are obstacles  
in the path of God-realisation  
—the example of a Sannyasin*

The Master would thus proceed with further denunciation of supernatural powers: "What is there in them? They will only entice the mind away from the one Divine Reality that is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. Listen, I shall tell a story. Once upon a time there were two brothers. The elder of them was filled with the spirit of renunciation from his early youth. Leaving his hearth and home he became a Sannyasin. The younger brother acquired much learning, married and was living the life of a pious householder. Now there is a custom which permits a Sannyasin to pay a visit to his birth-place after he

has lived a life of renunciation for a period of twelve years. Accordingly the Sannyasin brother came to visit his native village after a lapse of twelve years. He repaired to the house of the younger brother, beholding on the way his corn fields and other properties. Arriving at the gate the elder brother called out for the younger one by name. The latter came out and was surprised to see his elder brother there. His joy knew no bounds on account of meeting him after such a long time. After prostrating at the feet of his elder brother, he took him inside the house and began to attend upon him with great care and devotion. After meal both the brothers were engaged in conversation which touched on various topics; the younger brother asked the elder one incidentally, 'Well, brother, you are wandering about as a religious mendicant for so long a time, renouncing all the joys of this world. Please tell me now what you have gained thereby.' 'Do you want a demonstration of it?' rejoined the Sannyasin promptly. 'Then come along with me.' So saying, he took his brother to the bank of a river running close by their house. The elder brother crossed the river walking on its waters and cried out from the other bank, 'Have you seen now what I have gained?' Meanwhile the younger brother too reached the other bank by a ferry boat paying half an anna to the boatman, and asked his brother what was there to be noted at all. 'Why?' came the proud reply, 'did you not observe me crossing the river on foot?' At this the younger brother broke out into laughter and said, 'Well, brother, did you not notice how I too came by spending only half an anna? Is it then that after twelve years of

austerity you have only acquired this power? With half an anna I can easily do what your power has helped you to accomplish. How can I evaluate this power higher than the pittance spent by me.' This remark of the younger brother brought the elder one to his senses, and thenceforward he began to bestow his thoughts on God-realisation."

*Supernatural powers increase  
egoism—the story of the death  
and revival of an elephant*

In the course of his conversations the Master would try to teach us in various ways that these supernatural powers are quite worthless in the spiritual path and that they should be avoided by all means. We cannot refrain from recounting here another story told by the Master to bring out a similar moral: There was a Yogi who attained the power of infallibility through ascetic practices. As soon as he expressed his wish it would come to pass. By a mere command he could both kill and revive any one. One day the Yogi happened to meet on his way a pious monk who was found to be repeating the Lord's name and meditating upon Him always. The Yogi came to know also that the monk was living at a particular place for many years, uninterruptedly engaged in his devotional practices. The proud Yogi went to the lonely anchorite and said, "Well, you are praying to the Lord for such a long time; would you tell me what you have got thereby?" "What is there to be got, Sir?" replied the other. "I have no desire to get anything save God Himself; and that is not possible except through His grace. Hence I am going on calling upon Him so that some day or other

He may be pleased to have mercy on His humble servant." The puffed up Yogi remarked, "If you have got nothing at all, what is the good of this fruitless labour? Exert in a way that will bring you actual profit." At this the devotee kept quiet for a while and then said, "Well, sir, may I know what you have gained through your practices?" "What is the use of only just hearing about what I have achieved? Have an ocular proof of it," ejaculated the conceited Yogi, and turning at an elephant that was tied to a neighbouring tree he wished its immediate death. The elephant fell dead at once. Filled with pride the Yogi again ordered the dead elephant to come to life; and it stood up once more as before, moving its body. "Have you seen my power now?" the Yogi asked the pious anchorite standing by. Thereupon the devotee breaking his silence said, "What, after all, was there to be seen except that the elephant died and again came to life? But would you tell me how the death and the revival of the elephant concern you at all? Have you been saved from the cycle of repeated births and deaths by the attainment of this power? Have decay and disease left you? Or, have you realised the true nature of the indivisible Absolute that is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss?" These words dumbfounded the Yogi and brought him back to his senses.

Although Chandra\* and Girija were far advanced along the path to God-realisation, yet they could not

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\*In June, 1899, Swami Vivekananda sailed for England and America for the second time. A little after that a gentleman suddenly came to Belur Math one day and made himself known as 'Chandra.' He stayed there for about a month and was

attain to complete perfection because of their supernatural powers and the egotism resulting from them. Contact with the Master made them conscious

found to be often engaged in private conversations with Swami Brahmananda (the then President of the Order) who used to live mostly at Belur Math in those days. We have heard him enquire of the Swami repeatedly whether he felt anything there, i.e., whether he perceived the living presence of the Master in the monastery, and so on.

The gentleman would say that all the prophecies of the Master about him had come true. Only one thing yet remained to be verified, *viz.*, the Master's promise to appear before him at his last moment. He was wont to spend long hours in the shrine room in prayer and meditation with great devotion. His eyes would shed tears of love at such times. He took much delight in recounting his reminiscences of the Master, whenever requested to do so. He was very quiet by temperament. Finding him always seated quietly at one place and occasionally with closed eyes, one of the monks happened to ask him tauntingly whether he was in the habit of taking opium, whereupon he replied with great

of their defects, and as a result they proceeded again along the path of God with redoubled energy.

humility, "Pray, what offence have I done you to make you talk like that?"

While showing his respects on entering into the shrine for the first time, he addressed the Master's picture installed there, as 'Brother', and shed copious tears with an exuberance of devotional feelings. In appearance he was quite an ordinary man, having no demonstration of the ochre robes or any sectarian mark on the forehead. He had simply a piece of cloth on the loins, and another piece to cover the upper part of the body, an umbrella in the hand and a canvas hand-bag containing another piece of loin-cloth, a towel, and a tumbler for drinking water. As he told us, he would travel with this equipment from one place of pilgrimage to another. Swami Brahmananda showed him much respect and requested him to live permanently at the Belur Math itself. He too agreed to it and said he would return after making the necessary arrangements with regard to his landed properties and stay at the Math. But since then he has not turned up as yet. The above mentioned Chandra is probably identical with this gentleman.

## THE DOCTRINE OF TRANSMIGRATION— A RESTATEMENT

[In the following article an attempt is made to restate the doctrine of the transmigration of souls in order to bring it in line with certain facts of science that seem to contradict the theory in some of its details as ordinarily understood. These scientific facts are treated in detail in another article entitled "*Biogenesis versus Transmigration*," published elsewhere in this issue, and the following paragraphs are by way of reflections on the points raised in that article. The lines of thought suggested here do not presume to be based on scriptures. They are entirely speculative, and are to be taken only as the writer's personal views on a doctrine which seems to require a restatement in view of some important findings of modern science.]

### The Biological Point of View

**W**E draw the attention of our readers to the criticism of the doctrine of transmigration of souls from the point of view of the law of biogenesis, published elsewhere in this

issue. The criticism would appear relevant and forceful to any one who attaches some importance to the findings of science. We shall therefore consider in the following paragraphs whether it is possible to hold to the doctrine of transmigration without

doing violence to one of the fundamental laws of biology.

We shall begin by stating, for the benefit of our readers, the essential scientific facts which our contributor calls our attention to, and which have necessitated the present consideration of the doctrine of reincarnation. Leaving aside the question of the ultimate origin of life, it is an axiom of biology that no life comes out of previously non-living matter. The unit of live matter is the microscopic entity called the cell. The lowest forms of organism consist of a single cell, while the higher forms are made of large numbers of them according to their size and organisation. The birth of new living organisms from those already living take place in two ways. In the case of single-celled organisms, which form the lowest rung of the ladder of life, the cell, at a certain stage of development, breaks into two, and these in turn become two organisms capable of producing more of their type by the same process of splitting. In the case of organisms of higher development consisting of large numbers, sometimes of millions, of cells, the reproductive function is confined to certain specialised cells. While the rest of the cells are capable only of producing their kind and not a new organism as a whole, these specialised cells called the reproductive cells, when united with a similar cell coming from the opposite sex, are capable of producing a new organism. Two reproductive cells, when fertilised, as this process of their union is called, merge into each other so as to form a single cell, and then begin to split into new cells, as in the case of single-celled organisms; but in place of developing on independent lines as

in the latter case, they develop as a colony of closely organised cells, eventually giving rise to an organism of the same type as those from which the original cells came.

Now the question arises: if these are the facts of science, is there any reason for supposing that the new life thus produced is the result of a psychic being, a discarnate spirit, whose physical body has previously fallen off, getting into the reproductive cells that form the source of the new body? According to the hypothesis of reincarnation, as believed and explained commonly, it is something like that. But the obvious difficulty is that *even before the particular pair of reproductive cells started on their career of development as a new organism subsequent to the process of fertilisation, they were living entities.* Why should then life be connected with the entry of a discarnate spirit into them?

In the case of single-celled organisms the difficulty takes another shape. On the hypothesis that it is the presence of a psychic entity that originates life in every form of living matter, we have to suppose either that the original psyche or Jiva has split itself into two, when the cell splits, or that new ones have entered into the two divisions of the cell. The first hypothesis is by its very nature unacceptable, while the second one, in spite of its bewildering nature, would have been acceptable, had it not been for certain facts we observe even without any scientific apparatus. For example, an earth-worm may be cut into small pieces, but all the pieces will survive the cutting operation and develop into new earth-worms. The process of cutting in no way affects the property of life in the

cells of the earth-worm ; they were living before, and continue to do so afterwards. The intervention of a discarnate spirit seems to be quite unnecessary here for the origination and maintenance of life. The case of single-celled organisms does not seem to differ from this. In fact these organisms at the lower stages of evolution seem to differ from those at higher stages in that the central organisation of life in them seems to be very loose, and that there is in them practically no power-house holding within itself the dynamo of life, by severance from which all the cells constituting the organism may be deprived of their property of living.

This seems to us to be the sum and substance of the objection raised by our contributor to the theory of reincarnation. The objection is quite valid and requires the careful consideration from all who hold the doctrine of transmigration in esteem. It is therefore worthwhile for us to bestow some thought on the question and ascertain whether the doctrine of reincarnation and of the embodiment of discarnate spirits in new bodies can be reconciled with these findings of biology. Obviously we have to give up the idea that wherever life is present, a psyche, an ego, a soul or whatever else we may call it, must also be present. And in fact according to some modern scholars, such a pan-psyche conception is not envisaged by the older Hindu scriptures. They opine that it is a later development resulting largely from the rise of animal stories, of the penal code of the Smriti literature, of the Buddhist Jatakas and of the eschatological wild-growths of imaginative Puranas. In consistency with the spiritual view of the universe, one may

fall back on the doctrine of Christian theology that the soul is a special endowment of man, that it is created with the origin of the body, and that it survives the body but is never re-born—thus wiping away the doctrine of reincarnation from the list of one's theological beliefs. But then all the moral and philosophical difficulties associated with the Christian belief will arise, and drive us back to the theory of reincarnation. Moreover, the Hindus maintain that the memory of several links in one's past births can be revived by men of great spiritual powers, and as such the theory of reincarnation is said to stand on an experiential basis apart from its purely speculative value. Hence the doctrine cannot be given up so lightly but has to be restated and reconciled with facts of science.

### The Cell and the Ego

We shall attempt this reconciliation by first of all defining from our point of view, a cell and an ego—the two factors concerned in this discussion. A cell is a piece of living matter having a purely physical history traceable to the original protoplasm from which life must be supposed to have developed. An ego, on the other hand, is a non-dimensional psychic entity with a purely mental history. It used to be the contention of the old school of materialists that the ego is purely a product of the physical activities of the living cells, and being thus dependent on them, would cease to exist with the cessation of the physical and chemical processes that constitute the life of the cells. Our contributor's point of view too will tend towards this conclusion, when all its implications are fully developed. But it must be remember-

ed that the survival of the ego is a subject which pure physical science can never take cognisance of; for a disembodied ego is a mental entity which no physical apparatus can contact with in the absence of a material embodiment. Besides this, according to some eminent biologists like Hans Driesch, the theory of psycho-physical parallelism and the dependence of mind on matter have no substantial basis. Together with this fact has to be taken into account the findings of modern psychical research which, through the efforts of many eminent scientists, has been raised from a fad and a fake to a position deserving the respectable name of a science. The conclusion hitherto arrived at by this line of research also is that the ego or mind has a separate existence from its physical accompaniment and that it survives the body in which it was previously embodied. To those who are interested in this line of study the writings of Hans Driesch, the eminent biologist and philosopher, will give the scientific facts and arguments connected with it. Our purpose in drawing attention to this question is only to show that the line of distinction we have drawn between a cell and an ego is not without scientific foundation, and that when the ego is described as something having a mental history, the history referred to is not exhausted by that of any single material embodiment.

### **From the Unconscious to the Self-Conscious**

The line of distinction we have drawn between the ego and the cell is tentative, and its full implication cannot be developed until we have considered the relation between living and non-living matter. It is general-

ly presumed that living matter which forms the bodies of creatures is entirely discontinuous with non-living or brute matter that forms the world we see around us. Although science has not yet been able to give convincing proof against this belief, enough has been done to give substantial ground for holding that living matter is after all only the same brute matter in a higher state of organisation, and that structurally there is very great resemblance between them. For example at least four of the fundamental characteristics of living matter are shared by the supposedly inanimate atoms also. Each atom has a definite structure and unity of behaviour, all the parts within it acting not as a kind of loose aggregate but as subject to the configuration of the whole. One order of atoms is distinct from another and each maintains its distinction. Thus self-maintenance and structural organisation, the first law of life, is present in them. In the next place the atom is not passive, but like life is a centre of seething, palpitating energies and activities. The difference is only in the character of activities. And lastly certain atoms have been seen to change their order by internal transformations, as when helium changes into radium and lead. The origin of atomic species may become an interesting branch of study in the future. General Smuts in his book on Holism suggests and elaborately argues that colloid matter, which forms so important a subject of study in modern science, may in all probability be the missing link between the living and the non-living. These facts show that the distinction between brute matter and living matter is not one over which a bridge cannot be thrown. Science is on the

way of showing that brute matter is not as dead as it is supposed to be and that living matter is nothing other than the same brute matter at a higher state of evolution and a more complex state of organisation.

It must not be supposed that we are hereby reducing life into inorganic matter in the approved fashion of the mechanistic view of Reality. On the other hand our attempt is to show that life is the *first manifestation of the spiritual potentialities of matter*. According to no less an authority than Eddington, the advances made in the study of physics in modern times tend to show that the stuff of Reality is more akin to consciousness than to our popular conceptions of matter, and that the latter can at best be conceived only as the crust of Reality. This is in agreement with the Indian idea that matter is nothing but a degradation or gross manifestation of Spirit, and that it is a state in which the Spirit remains veiled or hidden. Evolution in that case is the gradual manifestation of the Spirit that is involved in gross matter, and its culmination must be supposed to be reached when Spirit recognises itself as such. In the scale of evolution gross matter occupies the lowest place, but a higher stage is reached when the living protoplasm makes its appearance. The evolution of living matter from inorganic matter need not be taken as spontaneous generation, in the first place because the contrast between the living and the non-living is not as absolute as is commonly supposed, and in the next place because evolution conveys the idea of a gradual development according to some law unlike spontaneous generation which signifies a break of continuity. The former is the

sudden outburst into the manifested condition, of an *involved purpose* that has long been in the process of incubation.

Now life in its early stages need not be conceived as endowed with a mind or ego,—a psychological history, if we may use our descriptive phrase, just as matter in its primeval condition need not be thought of as possessing life, although from the spiritual point of view the possibility or potentiality of such development must be conceded in both the cases. The living cell in the early stages of development has only a physical history like that of the atom, its only difference from the latter being in some of its workings. It is however in the process of developing the ego as the atom is in the process of evolving life. At what stage of the development of life the ego first makes its appearance is a question that cannot be settled. It can be said that self-consciousness is the sign of the birth of the ego; but it is difficult to determine at what point of evolution this faculty comes into existence. To credit rudimentary forms of life like a reproductive cell or a single celled organism with self-consciousness is to draw too freely on the bank of guess-work. At least we have absolutely no evidence in support of such a conclusion. In fact it is only in the case of man that we can say with certainty that there is self-consciousness and that an ego is consequently present. The progress of the study of animal psychology may perhaps show in future that even many of the higher varieties of sub-human species are endowed with this faculty.

The three points which we wish to emphasise as the result of this discussion are (1) that a living cell or



organism at a low state of development need not be credited with an ego, (2) that the ego comes into being only in the higher stages of life's evolution and (3) that hence we need not always associate life with the presence of an ego. If we are prepared to grant this, we can get over the incompatibility that our contributor points out between the theory of the transmigration of the ego and the law of biogenesis. For the chief difficulty here is that *we know a reproductive cell to be endowed with life even before it starts on its career as a new organism*, or in other words life is not a property that it comes to possess by virtue of a transmigrating ego gaining entrance into it but a faculty which it had at its very inception as a new cell by virtue of its unbroken continuity from the original protoplasm. If we grant that there is no invariable relation between life and ego, that the ego is only a later manifestation in the evolution of life, the difficulty pointed out above is automatically overcome. But then we have to give up one of our pet notions that *wherever there is life there is an ego, a jiva*. With that we shall also have to abandon our habit of thought attributing a soul, a transmigrating psyche, to a vast body of living organisms, on the ground that there is in them no evidence of self-consciousness that warrants a background of psychical history.

Having arrived at some definite idea regarding the relation between life and ego, we may now consider further as to what is meant by the transmigration of the ego. We said before that in matter the spirit is latent but unconscious; in life, at least in its higher stages, it gradually comes to consciousness; in the ego,

however, it becomes self-conscious. Self-consciousness may be described as the capacity to introspect and feel the distinctness of selfhood and its continuity. It is accompanied by consciousness of free will, and is the basis of rationality and moral experience. We can infer the presence of self-consciousness only in those forms of life where there is an indication of some of the above mentioned features, in however imperfect a form they might be. In man it is distinctively present, but whether any of the sub-human species possess it or not, we cannot say with certainty owing to our lack of insight into animal psychology.

The birth of the ego, as that of life and consciousness in the earlier stages of evolution, must be regarded as a sudden leap, an emergence which suddenly brings into light a new phase of the evolutionary purpose. It is an efflorescence of the Spirit and marks a distinct stage in its progress towards self-revelation. The ego makes its appearance only when the biological organism has become perfectly developed so as to be a suitable instrument for its manifestation and workings, even as the protoplasm of life emerges only after the material environment in the earth becomes adapted for its origin and growth. The function of organisms below the stage of self-consciousness is just to lead to that state in which the ego first emerges. Once the ego comes into being, it does not perish with the decay of the biological organism but migrates from body to body gathering experience and facilitating more and more the self-revelation of the Spirit. In this process the ego, no doubt, changes, but change does not mean death or destruction, even as in the

case of changes in the living body. The thread of continuity is kept on, each stage impressing itself upon, and gliding into, the succeeding stage. Hence in spite of the change, one may speak of the same ego as involved in the process.

Or if this evolutionary view of the ego is not acceptable, one may shelve aside the difficulty by taking shelter in the Hindu theory of eternity of creation and cyclic process of cosmic manifestation and withdrawal. Creation being eternal, one need not enquire how the egos come to be, but rest satisfied that at all stages of world's history there are egos ready for embodiment. When in the course of evolution the physical and biological conditions become suited for their embodiment, the egos take birth in bodies which the evolutionary purpose has for long been preparing and perfecting for their advent. Except that it avoids speculation on the origin and growth of the ego, this view does not in any way alter the general position stated by us.

### Identification versus Entry

In our conception of the transmigrating process also, we shall have to abandon our crudely materialistic symbols of thought. As we have seen before, the mere phenomenon of life need not in any way be associated with the presence of an ego or Jiva, and accordingly even in those species of beings endowed with self-consciousness, the cells that go to originate a new organism are living entities even prior to their association with an ego. In other words the ego or Jiva is not to be conceived as a hard substance which penetrates into some non-living stuff and brings it into life. It is on the other hand an organisation of

mind with a definite psychic history ; and it is more appropriate to speak of the ego as identifying itself with, than entering into, an already living and developing organism of the suitable type, at some stage of its growth which we cannot definitely ascertain. For, the conception of 'identification' is peculiarly mental unlike that of 'entering' which is essentially a material symbol. Identification conveys the sense of unity of experience without any implication of mergence of entity or of a merely mechanical type of connection. In the higher organisms, in man for example, the vital or merely biological phenomena do not originate from the ego, although it may control them. But all the higher powers of man, self-consciousness, personality, free will, rationality, moral experience and aesthetic appreciation, are directly connected with the presence of the ego; for the ego is the medium for the manifestation of these higher 'glories' of the Spirit which underlies all existence. As long as the biological properties of a body remain intact and suited to the habitation and development of the ego, the ego continues to identify itself with that body. But with the death of the body, it is forced to abandon its connection with it and identify itself with a fresh body. And so it goes on from body to body, gathering more and more of experience, and manifesting more and more of the Spirit's glory, until by perfect purification and spiritual enlightenment it develops from self-consciousness to super-consciousness—the state in which the Spirit attains the fullest self-revelation. Here the ego comes to the fulfilment of its purpose, and in the shock of final super-conscious illumination, it may be

described as dying in the Spirit by recognising its essence to be the Spirit itself. Or if the figure is changed and the final illumination is interpreted as Jiva recognising the identity of its nature with the Spirit and not as the merging of its entity, then the ego must be described as realising itself to be a manifestation of the Spirit, solely dependent on it and surviving as a conscious instrument of it. Whatever metaphors we might employ and in whatever philosophical concepts we might clothe the idea, the Spirit involved in nature gains the fullest self-revelation when the ego attains the super-conscious state.

#### **Nature, the Sweet Nurse**

Thus the path of evolution is from unconsciousness to life, from life to consciousness, from consciousness to self-consciousness, and from self-

consciousness to super-consciousness. And when super-consciousness is reached, there is no more transmigration; for "Nature's task is done, this unselfish task which our sweet nurse, Nature, had imposed upon herself. She gently took the self-forgetting soul by the hand, as it were, and showed it all the experiences of the universe, all manifestations, bringing it higher and higher through various bodies, till its lost glory came back, and it remembered its own nature. Then the kind mother went back the same way she came, for others who also have lost their way in the trackless desert of life. And thus is she working, without beginning and without end. And thus through pleasure and pain, through good and evil, the infinite river of souls is flowing into the ocean of perfection of self-realisation."

### **SCRIPTURAL LEAVEN OR LIVING WILL ?**

*By Mrs. Rhys Davids, D.Litt., M.A.*

[The article of Prof. Ghosh, on which Mrs. Rhys Davids comments in the following paragraphs, appeared in the April issue of the Vedanta Kesari. At the end of the article is printed what Prof. Ghosh has to say on the comments. We wish to say here a word on a new point raised by Mrs. Rhys Davids, namely, the growing influence of the philosophy of Immanence on Western theology. Cannot India claim some credit for this new movement? Are we to suppose that all the vast body of Indian religious and philosophical literature translated into European languages by Western scholars, and the work and writings of great Indian prophets and thinkers like Swami Vivekananda, Tagore, Gandhi, Radhakrishnan, etc., have had no influence on Christian thinkers of the West? It is true that in Neo-Platonism and in early Christian thought influenced by it the doctrine of Immanence is to be found. This literature was however, in existence for so many centuries, but why is it Christian thinkers of the West did not turn to it for inspiration till recent times? We feel that the influx of Vedantic thought into the West in various ways during the past one or two centuries together with the new situation created by the growth of science must have been mainly responsible for at least drawing the attention of Christian thinkers to their old heritage of Neo-Platonism. Leavening, especially in the realm of higher thought, is done more in these subtle and indirect ways than through directly traceable measures or violent methods of propaganda. We are prepared to admit that similar influence has been exercised by Christian teaching on Indian religious thought

too, especially in focussing the attention of modern Hindus on those aspects of their scriptures that teach true service to be the best form of spiritual discipline.]

**I**N introducing an article by Professor Ghosh to readers of the *Vedanta Kesari*, the editor has suggested, that he will welcome discussion of its 'line of study.' Writer and readers may well welcome the invitation, whether ensuing discussion be wise and pertinent, or the reverse. The article will take on prolonged vitality, and the writer will be enabled to see where he has made due impression, or where by some defect, either his own, or that of commenting writers, he has failed to carry them with him. In the comment I here submit, I make a criticism and a suggestion.

In the first place I submit, that the author has failed to make subject-matter fit title. He contends that 'a leavening' by Vedantic thought may be found in much contemporary thought of Western literature, notably in that of philosophy. Ancient European thought is intentionally put on one side. But a vast field remains, and brevity was imperative, limiting him to the citation of but a few instances. These few instances are, I venture to submit, not cases where a historical leaven has been at work, with the exception of Schopenhauer and Deussen. They are only quasi-*parallels* between Vedantic and European thought. He suggests, nay, he affirms, that in the Gifford Lectures, the late J. S. Haldane, and, in an unnamed book, Bishop D'Arcy each betrays what amounts to a 'confirmation' of two Vedantic standpoints. Of the former case he gives no proof, nor for the latter does he make out that there is more than a remarkable parallel. In the 'emphasis,' laid by

the Italian Gentile and the late Vivekananda, 'on action,' he finds a 'a ripple' as if of a felt vibration. But he admits that this is actually only a parallel. He refers to Fichte, Kant and Hegel, but gives no evidence that any one of these moved Schopenhauer or Deussen in the direction of Vedantic thought. And of the remarkable use made by Hegel of the concept of *Werden* (*bhava*), reminding us of the way in which early Vedanta was, as it were, seeking to rationalize its doctrine of Immanence, he makes no mention. Not that even here was there more than a notable parallel. Leavening goes behind the 'parallel' and shows us some energizing influence exercised by an earlier scripture. I am not saying that proof of such influence might not be shown; I only say it has not been shown so as to justify the title.

Of the two cases where a leavening is more plausibly to be assumed, and of these taking only Schopenhauer, it is not made clear how far anything making for lasting influence in his writings was due to the fact that he had read and enthused about a bad translation of the Upanishads. We know him in the West mainly for (a) his rationalized pessimism, (b) his awakening of Europe to the importance of the will. The former tendency (a) he may have derived from India, but it will have been from a degenerate Vedantism, not from the high message of religious hope and strength in the early Upanishads. And the latter (b) he can scarcely have derived from these. Whereas in *kama*, and in *kratu* also, they had a fine term for will,—*manas* too was as volitional as it was intellectual;

(*samkalpa* was an inadequate emergence)—the Upanishads never developed Yajnavalkya's great utterance of man's nature as of *kama*, *kratu*, *karma*. They left it sterile, and suffered the word *kama* to degenerate, swamped in upgrowing monasticism, *kratu* to die out, and *karma*, from being *matter* for adjudication, to become a dummy adjudicator at the post-mortem tribunal. Schopenhauer made 'will' usurp the position of man the 'willer,' but in shooting over the mark, he roused the philosophic conscience of the West. Yet we hear nothing of actual leavening by Indian thought; nor, for that matter, when Gentile is adduced, do we get behind 'action' to will.

I believe that the religion and philosophy of Immanence, which is put forward as a new message of tremendous vibrant significance in early Vedanta, has yet a great part to play in Western thought, but this article does not show any present tendency towards Immanence as the *result* of any knowledge of Vedanta. If here and there I now seem to see it faintly showing in, say, Western theology, this is due more to the Johannine valedictory utterances of Jesus and to Neo-Platonism, than to any Vedantic leaven.

And yet—and here I come to my 'suggestion'—it is at times hard to believe that *nothing* has ever supervened in mediæval Christian writings to inspire the writer. It is a subject I have neither space nor competence to go into, but to take one case only:—when we see St. Catherine of Genoa, in the 15th century, writing thus: (I quote from memory)—“My God is Me, not by simple participation but by a process of gradual

transformation,” we are amazed.\* Not merely at the virtual restatement of the Upanisadic formula of Immanence, but at the way in which she improves on and rationalizes it. Yet her biographer Von Hugel makes no comment about 'leaven,' and for the saint access to Indian literature will have been out of the question. Are we then to call such utterances just parallels, wherein Eastern sayer and Western writer have, through causes somehow similar, been driven to express themselves in similar terms?

Now here I go further than Indian writers of to-day in general and the present writer in particular appear to have gone. I do believe that 'leavening' of one age by another, of one culture by another, is possible and is true. And it is not in this case the result of scripture exercised directly or indirectly. It is a leavening of a man by a man. And what I testify is the result of some years of personal experience. Hereby I have come to hold certain things as verities, if only subjectively valid. Namely, I believe in an indefinitely great power of will as a possible development even in this much handicapped earth-body. Telepathy, or, better, televolition, known and taught by a saintly Brahman of forgotten name when the Buddhist movement began, and annexed his teaching, is now coming to be recognised scientifically.

Next, I believe in the indefinitely greater power of will wielded by man in the next world, and next world to that (*svarga* and *Brahmaloka*). Next, I believe in the emergence, as man in these becomes

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\*It was Mr. Edmond Holmes who told me of her.

a More in his long wayfaring, of the long memory of his former lives, it may be a gradual, a partial emergence. Lastly, I believe in the power and the will of the worthy in those two worlds to visit us of earth who may be trying to live our best and help others, and, in visiting, even where unseen and unheard, *to will us* with the knowledge they now have as stored in that longer memory. In the light of these four 'verities' it is possible to understand how a St. Catherine, in fifteenth century Gonoa, could receive and express a teaching from an unseen willer, himself or herself mindful of what, in a former life, he or she had been taught some thousand years earlier in India.

My sceptical Hindu brethren may say I labour under a form of *maya*, or indeed of *moha*. My sceptical Christian brethren may say no less. Yet why should we accept, with at least respect, the testimony of the Sakyamuni and his men, of the boy Samuel and the judge Eli, of Jesus, of Peter, Paul, Mohammed and many

more, and scout such experience as impossible for ourselves?

Or am I doing Professor Ghosh wrong in classing him with the usual sceptic, when it may be, he means by 'leaven' precisely this psychic inspiration of modern men in the West by men in the unseen, modern no less, yet who may have so *grown* as to remember the wisdom they once knew on earth? Does he shrink, in a world, where narrow knowledge still provokes the sneer, from telling us more clearly what he means by 'leaven'?

Be that as it may, I have here outlined what it has largely come to mean for me. And I would beg readers to consider it sanely and soberly, in that it opens up the possibility of a great More in life, not only in the life of a few elect men, but as within the scope and power of any earnest man and woman, ay, and any modern child Samuel—"Speak! Lord, for thy servant heareth!"—who single-mindedly desire to learn the true under the warding will of the Highest.

#### A NOTE ON THE ABOVE

Mrs. Rhys Davids has done me the honour of a critical review of my paper on the Vedantic Leaven published in the last April Number of the *Vedanta Kesari*. I welcome her conclusions, a note of disagreement notwithstanding. My paper was not primarily a piece of historical research, it was a theological confession of faith. I accept the suggestion that what appears to be merely historical parallels in case of the authorities cited by me may, ought one knows, be due to the working of the Vedantic Leaven. The theory that the leavening has been

brought about by occult causes or post-mortem psychical influences cannot be rationally refuted. But so much indigestible material has got mixed up in esoteric psychology that I do not feel competent to offer any opinion on the matter. The conclusion that one culture or faith is permeated by another has come to me in a deductive way. The spiritual values, or for the matter of that, the truths of the historic faiths of the world stand to one another, to borrow an expression of Whitehead's, in a relation of pre-hension. They are all subject to

the law of active participation in virtue of which each is immanent in all, all in each. This is the metaphysical background that leads me to claim for the Vedantic Leaven no more than Clement of Alexandria in the second century and Count Tolstoy in the nineteenth century claimed for the Christ-spirit. It is a commonplace of scriptural interpretation that the truth of divine message transcends its historic embodiments. As such the Vedantic Ideal is eternal as much as the Christ-spirit. These ideals are creative and interpenetrative. That the apparently divergent ideals of the historical religions go to the making of the common spiritual atmosphere of the race is with me an article of faith. They are elemental in a deeper and profounder sense than physical ingredients. So their inter-leavening is not a hypothesis, nor an induction culled in the region of an occult science but an indisputable fact of spiritual experience. I crave to be judged in the light of this experience.

In other words, the religious consciousness of man is in an intimate sense *en-rapport* with the ultimate nature of things. The law of Epigenesis or Creative Synthesis runs

through them all. This brings about the reconciliation and inter-leavening of values at successive stages of human achievement till we come to the Vedantic synthesis in one race and Christian synthesis in another. It is the working of the same law that has brought these two master-ideas into contact at many points of modern life and thought. Hence I have fully claimed that wherever there is the recognition of the identity of the Divine and human soul, the acceptance of the method of self-realisation through self-transcendence, the Vedantic Leaven is at work. Similarly I readily concede to a thinker like Tolstoy who claims that Christian Leaven is functioning wherever God is recognised as distinctly the other, where self-abnegating love is at work, where the law is fulfilled through bearing of one another's burden. Not simply Vedanta and the Christ-spirit but all faiths are in all men. As in biology so in religious experience, the ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny. Historic confirmation of this may be long in coming, but something in me whispers that these are the rudiments of a theology of to-morrow.

Prof. K. S. Ghosh.

## BIOGENESIS *VERSUS* TRANSMIGRATION

By *Bhagavati Das*

[The following article draws the reader's attention to certain scientific facts that raise some difficulties in the way of accepting the doctrine of transmigration of souls, at least in the form it is usually presented. We must state here that the writer himself is a pious Hindu, and he has written this article and we publish it in the spirit of disinterested quest after truth, so characteristic of Hinduism. Science and religion do not really contradict each other. When a contradiction really appears, it does not prove the defeat of either but only points to the need of a higher synthesis. Our object therefore is only to draw the attention of Hindu thinkers to this need, and not to refute the doctrine of transmigration of souls. As suggested by the writer towards the close of this article, we shall be glad to publish brief and well-written writings, discussing the points raised herein. We have given one possible way of solving the difficulty in the article entitled "Doctrine of Transmigration—a Restatement," appearing elsewhere in this issue.]

THE doctrines of *Karma* and transmigration have been accepted from immemorial times by all schools of philosophies and theologies in India—Vedic, Puranic, Tantric, Sankhya, Vaisheshika, Nyaya, Yoga, Jaina and Buddhist, the Charvakas or the materialists being the only exception. It is one of the fundamental beliefs of all these schools of thought that the soul must undergo numerous births, gathering experience in different grades of existence beginning with lowliest vegetable life. It has got to pass through the stages of germs, insects and animals, and come finally to be embodied as human being; or it may even receive the ethereal bodies of Devas, Gandharvas, and other unearthly beings, and thus complete its evolution, finally attaining to liberation, called variously as *Moksha*, *Nirvana* or *Kaivalya*. While there are differences of belief among different sects as regards the sojourn of the soul in the interval between a death and a birth on this earth, the number and kinds of bodies and the worlds into which it migrates and the mechanisms of transmigration, the essential ideas common to

all are the continued identity of the soul through all these migrations, its repeated severance from the physical body at death and its repeated re-entrance into other bodies at birth. Admittedly there is a persistent continuity of the subtle body (*Sukshma Sarira*) composed of *Manas*, *Prana* or vital energies, *Jnanendriyas* or five senses of perception, *Karmendriyas* or five seats of activities of different organs and the *Dhi* or intellect. Throughout the course of its migrations, there is, however, repeated discontinuity of the physical body or *Sthulasarira* by severance from the subtle body in death. The theory cannot dispense with the idea of the continued individuality of the soul which remains intact and unbroken, and of its existence as an individual separate from every other, throughout the course of its migrations. A *Jiva* is a distinct individual separate from every other even for Advaitins in the *Vyavaharika* or relative planes, though they deny any kind of duality in the Atman from the standpoint of *Paramartha* or Absolute Truth. Further the *Jiva* or the living being in a particular body



is a single indivisible entity which is to be distinguished from every other Jiva by the individuality of the body which it inhabits. These are essential ideas for the doctrine of transmigration.

Now, I wish to place before the readers certain scientific facts which seem to go against the hypothesis of transmigration. The evidential value of these facts would not have been much, if they had only not lent any support to the doctrine. Their significance for us lies in that they supply positive evidence which goes against that theory.

These data which present such a formidable front to the theory of transmigration are chiefly those discovered with regard to the process of reproduction by which new living beings take birth in this world. While it must be admitted that the whole mystery behind the birth of a new organism has not been unravelled by science, still there is a body of facts connected with it, well-attested by all eminent biologists and the knowledge of which has passed into the common possession of all students of biology and which leaves no room for doubt as to the nature of the process itself.

What, then, are these facts? It is now well established by biology that all organisms are either single corpuscles of living matter or are built up of a large number of such corpuscles, known as cells. Every organism, reproduced in the ordinary way, begins its life as a single cell. The simplest organisms rarely get beyond this stage; almost all of them remain strictly unicellular. But in all other cases the original single cell in which the individual life begins, the fertilised ovum, divides itself into two, each of these again into two and

so on. Thus through the process of division they multiply into a coherent mass of cells, and gradually give rise to a more or less complex body, a multicellular organism. The cells represent elementary organisms that are not composed of lower units capable of life. Among the vital phenomena which cells are seen to exhibit before microscopic examination none is so strikingly distinctive of living matter as is this process of cell division. By the continued division of an original germ-cell or egg-cell all the tissue cells of a multicellular animal arise and the germ-cell or egg-cell itself arises in the parent body from other cells by cell division. The rapid advance of biological research is continually adding weight to the conclusion reached years ago that every cell originates by division of some pre-existing cell (*omnis cellula e cellulae*). This is now regarded as one of the fundamental laws of biology; and obviously it is a corollary of the biogenetic law which states that *all living matter, known to exist only in cells, originates from pre-existing living matter*. No spontaneous generation of cells occur either in plants or in animals. The many millions of cells of which, for instance, the body of a vertebrate animal is composed, have been produced by repeated division of one cell, the fertilised ovum, in which the life of every animal commences.

All forms of reproduction fall under one or other of two heads; (a) Agamogenesis or asexual reproduction in which the detached portion (which may be either a single cell or a group of cells) has the power to develop into a new individual without the influence of other living matter—as in protista and the earth-worm; (b)

Gamogenesis or sexual reproduction in which the detached portion, in this case always a single cell (ovum), is acted upon by a second portion of living matter (the sperm), likewise a single cell, which, in most cases, has been detached from the body of another individual, the male. In sexual reproduction the two fuse together (this process is called fertilisation) to form a single new cell (the zygote) endowed with the power of developing into a new individual by fission (mitosis). In multicellular species certain cells are exclusively retained as germ-cells distinct from other cells of the body. While the latter cells may reproduce only tissue cells, the germ-cells can reproduce cells which develop into a complete organism of the species, comprising many kinds of tissues and the protoplasm of future germ-cells. These cells contain a share of the protoplasm from which the parent came. Thus there is a continuity of protoplasm, and any living being of to-day has within it protoplasm derived from its earliest ancestor.

What do these facts signify? Here is an amoeba, the simplest known living creature. Let us look at it through the microscope; we find it dividing itself into two individuals, each of these again dividing itself into two new individuals giving rise to four germs, these again into eight and so on, until a host of them are reproduced in a few minutes under our eyes. Let us cut a star-fish into two halves. Each half, we notice, sprouts new arms and becomes a whole star-fish. What meaning has this for us. Are we to infer that a Jiva or *lingasarira* enters into the parent amoeba cell before every moment of fission and tears away a part of it for its habita-

tion? Even if all cases of natural reproduction by cell division are supposed to be due to the entry of a disembodied agent into the physical frame, are we to infer the same process occurring every time we arbitrarily cut an earth-worm into small sections each of which we could notice developing into a complete individual of the same species in due time? Granting for the sake of argument that a *lingasarira* can exist without a physical frame and that it can enter a physical body from outside, still we are precluded from making the foregoing inference in recognition of the fact *that life already existed in the two dividing parts before the division started*. Further we must add that we cannot think of a living physical body, however low in evolution, without a soul or Jiva which is responsible for the life activities of the physical body. If it were not so, there would have been room for inferring the entry of a fresh soul. Well, then, we have to say that these individuals did not exist as separate entities in the parent bodies, and that their separate individualities started with the separate individualities of the bodies. A moment before one body and one Jiva, and the next moment two or more bodies and as many Jivas!

Such a conclusion seems to be rather fantastic, if not absurd.

Equally wonderful to contemplate is the mystery that attends the phenomenon of two germs coming together and fusing into a single cell, which can be seen under a microscope. And this exactly is the process by which all the higher orders of living creatures have started life. Two living germ-cells, having entirely different individualities, unite together

to form a single tiny cell which grows in course of time into a fully developed organism. We find here that inspite of the difference in their individualities before their union they develop into a single individual after that. Our ideas of individuality or personality or Jivahood has certainly to be revised in the light of these facts.

What is the bearing of these facts on the doctrine of transmigration? First of all there is no persistence of the same individual after a cell division or cell fusion. The greater is this mutation in the case of the higher species where both these processes are required for the birth of an individual. The three ideas *viz.*, the indivisible unity, persisting identity, and separate existence at all times of every Jiva from all other Jivas, so essential for the doctrine of transmigration, are directly contradicted by the facts of biogenesis.

Secondly biogenesis shows that leaving off one body by complete severance from it is unnecessary for the Jiva's birth in another. On the other hand, it shows conclusively, to quote Caroline E. Stackpole, "an unbroken material (protoplasmic) continuity from one generation to another that forms the physical basis of inheritance and upon which the integrity of the species depends. As far as known, living things never arise save through this process. In other words every mass of existing protoplasm is the last link in an *unbroken chain* that extends backward in the past to the first origin of life." Thus there was no time when any of the present Jivas living in a material body existed apart from a physical basis. The idea of its repeated severance from the body, an idea so essential for the doctrine of transmi-

gration, is also thus precluded. Those who wish to maintain that the individual repeatedly dies at every occurrence of division may use the word 'death', seeing that the parent cell does not continue any more *as such*, but then it will be a case of quibbling and we are not concerned with verbal controversies. The word 'dead' applied in this context cannot have more than a figurative meaning, for the so-called 'dead' individual continues to live in the two individuals into which it has divided itself and there has been no *corpse*. The conclusion is inevitable that no Jiva existing in a present body has ever died before, it has never been without its physical abode, it never *left* one to seek another. Nor is it possible to claim the privilege of transmigration for human beings alone exempting them from the application of biogenetic objections to the doctrine on the ground of their being better organised and evolved individualities, and contending that the objections are valid only in regard to the lower creatures; for we have seen that the process of reproduction, *viz.*, cell division and cell fusion, is essentially the same for all organisms *not excluding* man. Therefore the implications of the foregoing biogenetic law must apply as much to the human species as to the sub-human species.

Biogenesis thus excludes the need as well as the possibility of a disembodied spirit entering into living or non-living matter for rebirth. And without this the theory of transmigration loses all significance. The doctrine therefore has either to be abandoned or modified in such a way as to leave room for the fact of biogenesis and its immediate implications. Is it possible to formulate

such a theory of rebirth which will not contradict biological facts? Or is it possible to give to those facts other interpretations than those given

in this article? The writer would like very much to be enlightened by those who have thought well on this subject.

## THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD

*By P. V. S. Narayana, M.A., B.L.,*

[Mr. Narayana was lately Fellow of the Andhra University in the Department of Philosophy. To give a clear statement of one's conception of God is very difficult. With his knowledge of comparative religion and philosophy, Mr. Narayana throws many suggestive hints on this difficult subject, and spiritual aspirants will find in them much light and help.]

**A**THEISM and ethical scepticism are the formaments of the age. The modern mind is signalling the stigmata of a fateful declivity. We are in the cruel clutches of a shallow, sensual and spiritually impoverished epoch. We have created our own dead-locks, our own inhumanities out of our own conceits. We have, in ruthless hurry, chosen the wrong set of values for gratification. It is time to take stock of our ideologies and make a drastic spring-clearance of all rubbish. It is time to know the simple truth about God, the commonplace of all religions and philosophies. We have only to resurrect the familiar and the obvious, to know them and to be free.

That God is the Supreme Being is the note of all religions. He is both Immanent and Transcendent, the ground and goal of all existence and values. The early Greek thinkers, the sophists and even the primitive races were not new to this truth. We meet with the same postulate in the language of contemporary philosophy, in Alexander's Space, Time, and Deity and in Croce's idealism. With scientific claim the truth is pressed upon us in Smut's Holism. With more emphasis and less exactness, it is seen

through the veils of J. S. Huxley's religion without revelation and Nicolai Hartmann's theory of values. To Middleton Murray, God forms the subject of the science of metabiology. In imaginative literature it has found its ample iconography in Shaw's Back to Mathesullah. The Shaw of 1933 spoke to the Black Girl with her knob-kerry: "God is at your elbow, and He has been there all the time." This is one of the greatest truths ever uttered with consummate levity. This, in fact, is the direct challenge to the Deistic conception of God. In India, for example, the Yoga, a fundamentally non-theistic system like the Snakhya, inserted the conception of a transcendent God only to satisfy the religious promptings of the soul. A God who sits in unbroken silence upon His lonesome throne, is, at least, so far as man is concerned, an ontological zero. "Am I a God at hand, said the Lord, and not a God far off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill Heaven and Earth? saith the Lord?" (Jer. xxiii, 25.). The New Testament improves still further upon this language expressing the living presence of God in the Universe.

"Know ye not that ye are a temple of God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you." (1 Cor., iii, 16.)

In the Upanishads God is spoken of as being in all things and in all places. The Mundaka regards the wind as His breath and the universe as His heart. He is, in fact, the inmost self in all things. This does not mean that He is a synonym for Nature. Divine transcendence is as much a part of divine nature as divine immanence. The Katha brings home to us the central truth about God in simple poetry:

"The light as one penetrates into space  
And yet adapts itself to every form,  
So the inmost self of all beings dwells  
Enwrapped in every form and yet remains outside.  
The air as one penetrates into space  
And yet adapts itself to every form,  
So the inmost self of all beings dwells  
Enwrapped in every form and yet remains outside.  
The sun, the eye of the whole universe,  
Remains pure from the defects of eyes external to it,  
So the inmost self of all beings remains  
Pure from the sufferings of the external world."

(Katha. V, 9-11)

As the one eternal supreme spirit, God is above and beyond all the multiple phases of His conditioned being. After declaring that He is the source and dissolution of the whole universe, the Lord of the Gita speaks: "Since

I am beyond the perishable, and higher also than the imperishable, therefore am I celebrated in the world and in the Veda as the best of beings." (XV. 18.) The conception of an eternal spirit of which the world of space-time is only a fragmentary expression, is a belief passionately held in Platonism. Like the Upanishadic sages, Plato powerfully advocated the view that knowledge and happiness depend on finding a firm anchorage for thought and conduct, beyond time and change. In Hindu theology, God is looked upon as creating the various forms of life as citadels and then entering into them as citizen. There is no puff of existence so trivial for His habitation; He is everywhere as the story of Prahlada indicates. No idea, so far as this country is concerned, has so thoroughly gone into the heart of the millions as the idea of Divine Immanence. The Hindu is convinced more of this truth than even the actuality of his own existence. Whatever its defects, it makes the burden of the flesh less ignoble.

Higher reasoning, rooted in spiritual consciousness, will bear witness to the axiom that in all outpourings of the spirit, the reality of the spirit is manifest. In the religious consciousness of the highest order, God is the immaterial spirit exempt from the limitations of space and time and the values that are integral to that order of being. The two great words of Indian philosophy, Atman and Brahman, bring out the whole kernel of truth regarding the essential nature of the Deity. This sterling nomenclature constitutes, to me, the gist of Indian philosophy. By these two words, the Hindu thinkers could take in one hold, the metaphysical identity

of the individual soul and the Supreme Soul. The Atman or the spiritual principle manifested in man, is no other than Brahman, the cosmic principle pervading the whole universe. The universe, the sum of all objects of thought, has the same live principle or Atman pervading it as is found in man. The same Atman is thus the animating principle of both the individual soul and the objective world of appearances, if you do not misuse this word. The Brahman without, that is, the power or spirit that operates in the universe is one and the same as the Atman within man's innermost self. In this sense,

subject and object are one; I and my foe are one; I and my father are one. The 'thou' within you is the same as the 'that' you foolishly imagine to be outside and different. This ringing voice of an ancient nation that could not be blown out by bullets, is embalmed in the final saying of those radiant sages of the Upanishads—TATTVAMASI—Thou art That. The open sesame of any form of sentient destiny, here or elsewhere, now or ever, lies in the recapture of this secret for the service of life itself, within the forms of perishing civilizations which have their own seasons of rise and fall.

## SAINT RAIDASA

*By Ram Chandra Tandan, M.A., LL.B.*

[Mr. R. C. Tandan is a Hindi scholar, and the translator of Mira Bai's songs. In this article he gives a sketch of the life and teachings of a well-known saint of North India.]

**A**T a time when a powerful and earnest movement for obtaining justice towards Harijans or the so called "untouchables" is going on in this country, it will doubtless be of interest to recall the name of one, who himself a Harijan, had preached four centuries back in no uncertain words, the equality of men before God. This was Saint Raidasa. Namadeva, Sadana, Sena, Kabir, Raidasa, Kamal, Dadu, Nabhadasa, Krishnadasa—there is a long list of saints, who, having sprung from the lower grades of society, rose to occupy a spiritual eminence therein, and whose poems, such as have been preserved and handed down to us, contribute to the undying glory of the Hindi language and the Hindu religion. Next perhaps to Kabir,

Raidasa is the most venerated among these saints.

Unfortunately for us, we have the scantiest scientific data, wherewith to construct the lives of most of these religious leaders of our Mediaeval society. The dates of birth and death of Raidasa are matters of surmise. Tradition has it that he lived up to a very ripe old age, and that he was a disciple of the famous saint and reformer Ramananda and a colleague and contemporary of Kabir. We find in various songs of Mirabai, Raidasa being mentioned as her teacher. Between Ramananda, Kabir, and Mirabai the dates of Raidasa's period of life must lie. But even the dates of these celebrities are not free from considerable doubt. That Ramananda himself lived to a

very old age is a fact which finds mention in the *Bhaktamala* of Nabhadasa. The date of birth of Ramananda has been variously mentioned by scholars—the surmises ranging from 1299 to 1400 A. D. In a recently discovered work entitled the *Prasanga Parijata*, said to have been completed about 1460 but whose authenticity is itself not beyond doubt, the date of Ramananda's death is mentioned as Samvat 1505, equivalent to A. D. 1448. In view of the long life admittedly enjoyed by Ramananda, it seems not unreasonable to suppose that he lived through the latter half of the fourteenth and the first half of the fifteenth century. Tradition is strong on the point of Kabir and Raidasa having been the disciples of Ramananda. The fact also finds mention in the *Prasanga Parijata* above referred to. Kabir and Raidasa both belonged to Benares where Ramananda had made his seat. That Kabir was much senior to Raidasa is a fact which can be gleaned from the references to Kabir found in Raidasa's works. So far, I have not been able to discover a direct reference to Ramananda in the works of Raidasa. It would seem that though Kabir and Raidasa both came under the influence of Ramananda, Raidasa was but a junior contemporary of Kabir, and a mere boy while admitted into the circle of the veteran saint Ramananda. Raidasa had, from his childhood, a religious bent of mind, and gave himself in service to Sadhus and saints of his time, and Ramananda, whose sympathies for the down-trodden castes was too well known at the time, recognised Raidasa as a promising initiate in his circle. Keay mentions in his book *Kabir and his Followers* the foundation in 1543

of a sect of Sadhus in the district of Mirzapur. The founder was one Vira Bhan, a disciple of Udaidasa, himself a disciple of Raidasa. Now, if 1543 may be taken to be roughly the date of the death of Udaidasa, the demise of Raidasa would be dated somewhat earlier. Raidasa having lived to a very old age (said to be 120 years, by some accounts), his disciple Udaidasa would probably not have long outlived him. It would be reasonable to fix the dates of Raidasa between 1430 at one and 1530 at the other end. These dates would account for Raidasa's discipleship under Ramananda, his being a junior contemporary of Kabir, and also his acceptance of Mirabai as a disciple of his own. Mirabai's widowhood occurred, according to Pandit Gaurishanker Hirachand Ojha sometime between 1518 and 1523. She probably met Raidasa in the course of her pilgrimage and at a time when the latter had already become very old. Raidasa thus flourished during the last three quarters of the fifteenth and the first quarter of the sixteenth century. For want of more definite data, this is all that can be said at present.

Some people have tried to establish that Raidasa lived in Maharashtra or Rajputana. The variety of language and diction met with in the works of Raidasa would lend some colour to such a supposition, but we have definite statements in some of his songs preserved in the *Adi Grantha* of the Sikhs, compiled about the end of the sixteenth century, that the ancestors of Raidasa lived and plied their low trade in and round about Benares. There is no doubt that Raidasa belonged to Benares. He seems to have travelled much, and to have visited

not only Maharashtra and Rajputana but also Gujerat, where he created for himself a very large following. Even to this day the sect of Ravidasis to which he gave his name, persists in Gujerat.

There is little doubt that Raidasa was a *chamar* or tanner by caste. The fact of his humble origin has been frequently and almost painfully reiterated in his songs. His ancestors, as we find mentioned in one of his songs, were engaged in the skinning and curing of the skins of dead cattle. His father Ragghu, it would seem, had risen to comparative affluence, and disliked his son attending more to the Sadhus than to his father's trade. The name of Raidasa's mother is said to have been Ghurbiniya. Ragghu in his anger is said to have driven out his son from his house, and Raidasa built for himself and his wife a small thatched cottage behind his parental home, and the young couple lived there unconcerned by the wrath of Raidasa's parents. Raidasa made his living by making shoes and as a cobbler, and appears to have given both honest and efficient service to his customers. A considerable portion of his earnings was yet offered to Sadhus and holy men, and he seems to have slowly risen in the estimation of his fellow citizens.

Numerous anecdotes and miracles are related about Raidasa which would cause a considerable strain on our credulity. One of these is that a Sadhu once appeared to him and presented him with a piece of *paras* stone, the very touch of which is said to transmute iron into gold. The Sadhu even demonstrated such a transformation. Raidasa would not at first accept this gift, and later asked the Sadhu to slip the stone in the thatch

of his cottage. When thirteen months later the Sadhu came to see Raidasa again, he enquired as to what use the latter had made of the stone. Raidasa told the Sadhu that he would find the stone where he had left it in the thatch. Raidasa certainly lived a contented life, and depended upon his own labours for his livelihood. Later on as his fame for devotion went round and he gave more and more of his time to spiritual discourses, he seems to have been induced to accept the offerings of his disciples for the satisfaction of his bare needs, and as he further advanced in age, to have entirely given up his profession. Out of the money entrusted to him by his disciples, Raidasa is said to have built a *dharamshala* or home for pilgrims, and also a temple, where in later life he was induced by his followers to move himself. It would not be surprising that his followers wanted to take Raidasa out of his mean surroundings. For though Raidasa appears to have gained the increasing veneration of his fellow citizens, a prejudice against his low origin seems to have persisted in the minds of men throughout. Benares has always been a citadel of Hindu orthodoxy, and the persistence of prejudice against low caste should cause us no surprise. Raidasa himself stoutly refused to accept that his low caste mattered in the eye of God, and he continued to mention the names of earlier saints whose sainthood had been acknowledged in spite of their low origin. But Raidasa's almost too frequent mention in his song of his humble caste leaves one to doubt, if in his dealings with men, especially caste Hindus, he had succeeded in shaking off his obvious complexes. Some of the anecdotes concerning



Raidasa mention how some of the caste Hindus had come to grief because of their want of faith in Raidasa or because of having insulted him for his low origin. One thing would appear to be clear that though Raidasa gained in reputation because of his saintly life and character, prejudices against his caste never entirely died out in his life-time, and that his followers themselves were drawn for the most part from among men of humbler origin.

It is not known whether Raidasa himself transcribed his songs or made any collection of them. The probability is that the task was left to be performed by his disciples, that is, by those among them who were literate. It is, however, certain that various private collections were made and the text must have greatly suffered in the process. The Nagari Pracharini Sabha, reporting on the search for manuscripts, notices three different collections in the first volume of its Report. These are 'Raidasa ki Bani', 'Raidasa ke Pada', and 'Raidasa ki Sakhi tatha Pada.' I understand that the Sabha has since, brought to light a fuller collection of Raidasa's works. Mr. Kshitimohan Sen of Shantiniketan, whose knowledge of the literature concerning our saints is vast, has recently brought out an edition of Dadu's poems. He mentions two voluminous collections of poems of Hindi saints, one in the possession of Shri Chandrika Prasad Tripathi of Ajmer, and the other in that of Shri Shankar Das of Jaipur, both containing poems of Raidasa. Rai Bahadur Pandit Tara Datt Gairola of Garhwal mentioned to me several years back, of a similar collection which was in his possession. I am sure if some competent Hindi scholar

undertook the collection and proper editing of the available poems of Raidasa, a valuable edition of his works would be forthcoming. As it is, reliance has to be placed on the only printed work available, viz., 'Raidasajiki Bani' published by the Belvedere Press of Allahabad. In addition to half a dozen *sakhis* and eighty-seven *padas* brought together in this volume, we find forty *padas* collected in the *Adi Granth* of the Sikhs. Twenty-three *padas* are common to both, though the readings found in the two collections vastly differ.

Raidasa was a pilgrim of the *Bhakti-marga* or the path of devotion. To him this world is full of sorrow and suffering. The very thought of having been born causes him pain. He believes in the cycle of births and rebirths, and craves for release from it. Such an end can only be achieved through the mercy of God, and such mercy is attainable only through prayer and devotion to the Supreme Being. Almost the same ideas occur in his songs again and again. He says :

*This sea of Existence is an endless torture, O Govinda ! One can see no end therein.*

*Far, far is my home, and difficult to reach: speaking wilt Thou not give me assurance ?*

*Devotion to Thee is a ladder for the saints : wilt Thou not help me to climb ?*

*It is a boat of iron, laden with stones; and I am without good deeds or emotions.*

*The desires are like waves, and infatuation Death : yet my mind is after the fish.*

*O Lord of the humble, listen to my prayer. Why dost Thou delay ?*

*Raidasa is a slave at the feet of the saints. Give me protection now.*

Time and again is Raidasa moved by the falsehood and the transience of life as it appears to thoughtless people. "Why sleepeth?" he cries out passionately, "wake thou, o mad man. This false life thou knoweth as true."

*High palaces, halls and kitchens—  
and then not one hour to live !  
This body is like a matted shutter  
made of grass : when the grass  
has been burnt up, to dust it  
comes.*

*Brother, kindered, family, and companions—all say, "Take him out quickly!"*

*The women of the house, who embraced thee in life, run away crying, "Ghost !"*

*Says Raidasa : Everyone is plundered in this world. I have escaped saying only the Name of Rama.*

Raidasa's faith in the power of prayer is infinite. It is by various names that he invokes his Lord. Rama, Govinda, Hari, Murari, Mukunda—whatever name he invokes, it is always the *Nirguna* or the Attributeless Lord that is meant. He calls upon all and sundry to join with him in repeating the Name of the Lord.

*Repeat, ye people, the Name of  
Mukunda, of Mukunda. With-  
out Mukunda the body wear-  
ieth.*

*Mukunda is the Giver of Redemp-  
tion.*

*Mukunda is our Father and Mother.*

*Living repeat the Name of Mu-  
kunda, dying repeat the Name  
of Mukunda.*

*His servant is ever in bliss.*

But the devotion which Raidasa calls upon people to offer to the Lord is not of the ceremonial kind. Of its futility he seems to be too well aware. The devotion which he asks the people to offer must result in the effacement of the self.

*Such is Devotion, listen, O brother.  
When Devotion is attained,  
pride departs.*

*What avails the dancing and the  
singing ? What avails the  
performance of the penances ?*

*What avails the washing of the feet  
—if the Essence is not recog-  
nised ?*

*What avails the shaving of the  
head, what the performance of  
pilgrimage and fasting ?*

*Master and slave, devotee and  
servant—these relationships  
avail not, if the Great Essence  
is not recognised.*

*Says Raidasa : Devotion to Thee  
is a distant object—he who  
finds it is greatly fortunate.*

*Abandon the pride, and efface the  
self, for thou art like an ant,  
and eateth the pickings.*

The formal offerings to the Deity are of little worth, unless the mind be bent in devotion. How beautifully does Raidasa express himself on this point !

*What shall I offer Thee for wor-  
ship, O Rama ? Fruits and  
flowers rare, I find not.*

*The milk in the cow's udder is de-  
fled by the calf tasting it.*

*The 'bhramara' hath contamina-  
ed the flower, and the fish the  
water.*

*The serpent entwines the sandal-tree : poison and nectar are to be found side by side.*

*In the mind is the worship : in the mind, the incense : in the mind I attend on Thy natural Form.*

*I know not Thy worship or oblation. Says Raidasa : What shall be my fate ?*

Songs of great beauty and devotion could easily be multiplied. One more, however, should suffice.

*How can I forsake now the utterance of Thy Name ?*

*Thou art, O Lord, as the Sandal-wood, and I am like water : Thine odour permeates every particle of my body.*

*O Lord, Thou art like a dense Forest, while I am like a peacock.*

*I fix my gaze on Thee, even as the 'chakora' fixes its gaze on the moon.*

*O Lord, Thou art like a Lamp, and I am like a wick, which burns out its flame day and night.*

*Thou art, O Lord, like a Pearl, and I am just a thread that strings it.*

*We mix together as gold mixes with borax.*

*Thou art the Master, O Lord, and I am Thy servant.*

*Such is the devotion which Raidasa offers Thee.*

And such was Raidasa, who spent his life in earnest devotion to his Lord, and may be said to have died in the faith embodied in the well-known lines :

*Who cares, what one's caste or calling may be ?*

*He who prays unto Hari, is by Hari claimed as His own.*

## THE HISTORICITY OF PROPHETS

*By R. Ramakrishnan, M.A., L.T.*

[People whose religious faith centres round prophets and incarnations of old are very often distressed to find the verdict of historical criticism going against their cherished convictions. The suggestions offered by Mr. Ramakrishnan in this article will go a great way in solving the difficulty of persons confronted with such perplexing situation.]

**EVERY** society can boast of heroes in all departments of its activity; but the great men that really attain immortality are surely the prophets. This is not in the least surprising when we realise that the line of work in which the prophets engage themselves relates to the eternal verities of human existence, while the labours of the politicians and the statesmen, of business magnates and financiers are confined to the changing aspects of earthly life. The prophets direct their energies to the solution of problems such as the

existence and nature of God, the destiny of the human soul, etc. Hence there is in their researches an element of the immortal and the unchanging.

Prophets of course are few in number, and the greatest ones of the world can be counted on one's fingers. The universe is governed by an intelligent Law and this Law creates prophets only when there is a real and felt need for them. When we think of the world's greatest prophets, the names of Buddha, Jesus Christ and Muhammad strike us immediately. Each of

these prophets is associated with a major religion (major from the point of view of the number of votaries). There are other minor religions and each of them has its prophet too. There has ever been a profusion of prophets in our own land, India. We revere a host of them. Krishna, the preacher of the Gita, Sankara, the rejuvenator of Hinduism, Ramanuja, Madhwa, Mahavira, the founders of Jainism, Nanak—these are a few of the great names. Zoroaster, Confucious and Lao-tse are a few other famous names honoured in different lands. But in thinking of the world's mighty prophets, we must always remember one great truth, *viz.*, that history has recorded the lives of only a very few of the prophets, that a great majority of them lived unknown to mankind, though their work was as potent as that of the prophets known to us. This is in a way deplorable, but so far as the seers of ancient India are concerned the position is understandable. We of the present day give too much prominence to *who* says a thing rather than to *what* is said. We care more for the composer than for the sweetness of a song. With the Indians of old, the message mattered more than the man. The meaning of an utterance mattered more than the time of its utterance. Hence we know practically little about the authors and codifiers, the composers and commentators of the brilliant philosophical treatises which are our proud heritage. But yet no one can deny that these men and women, who have left us the results of their researches and enquiries, without allowing the image of their personalities to pass on to us, who, like master-musicians hidden in a tower and unseen by the populace, send out into

the world enchanting melodies, must really have been great prophets, perhaps greater than those whose names we revere in history. Such supreme self-effacement as we see in the lives of these ancient seers and such utter disregard for personal reputation as they are the examples of, are a great lesson to us at this time of the day when the tiniest waiting-shed on the road does not fail to bear an inscription immortalizing the name and the munificence of the donor.

It must however be admitted that the absence of intimate details connected with the personal life of a prophet results in certain difficulties to the votaries of the prophet. Man's mind always searches for concrete things, it finds it hard to hold on to abstract things for long. A bird en-caged for long and accustomed to the perch in the cage fears, when released, to fly into the vastness of space lest it should be lost ; so too does the mind, fed on thoughts of the little concrete things in life, refuse to conceive abstractions ; at any rate there is grim resistance first, though at last the mind may gain the capacity for holding on to abstract conceptions. That is why wise men say that in the evolution of the soul image-worship is a necessary and a very helpful phase. What applies to the worship of God applies with equal force to the adoration of prophets. The prophets themselves never seek personal honours ; they do not expect applause ; on the other hand, history shows us that in many cases prophets were persecuted rather than honoured ; and in one case at least contemporary humanity was mad enough to crucify a mighty seer for the crime of promising to mankind entry into the Kingdom of God. But posterity cannot

help honouring in a thousand little dear ways the memory of the prophets. The teachings of the prophets are inspiring, no doubt, but their lives are fascinating too. And to the disciple, every word of the great master's teachings is pregnant with uplifting sense ; so too is every little detail connected with the master's earthly life saturated with spiritual significance. And as he treasures every utterance of the master, so too does he feel ennobled in reviewing the incidents in the master's life. The personality is as redemptive as the principle embodied in that personality. We often hear a cry that we must care more for the principle than for the personality. There does not appear to be any great danger in showing reverence to both. For the personality is merely the embodiment, the expression, the concrete aspect, of the principle.

An illustration will make this point clear. Let us take the example of Sri Ramakrishna, the prophet of the new age. Sri Ramakrishna never sought for personal glory ; his chief disciple, Swami Vivekananda, never preached that the Paramahansa must be regarded as *the* prophet ; in fact for quite a long time after the commencement of his lecturing work in America, he only preached the essentials of Vedanta, without even referring to the Paramahansa, though Sri Ramakrishna was the very personification of Vedanta ; and his lecture *My Master* was delivered later in response to insistent demands. Neither Ramakrishna's nor Vivekananda's aim was to found a cult. We find in Vivekananda's writings numerous instructions to his co-workers and disciples always to stress the principle rather than the person of Sri

Ramakrishna. But yet while humanity to-day drinks deep of the fountain of Ramakrishna's wise sayings and draws inspiration from his sublime teachings, it also takes perennial interest in the life of the great saint. This is because every action in the life of Ramakrishna illustrated some grand principle taught by him. For instance, the simple fact of the young Ramakrishna taking his first alms after his *Upanayanam* ceremony at the hands of a lady who did not belong to his own caste illustrates the truth that while scriptural injunctions and hoary conventions are certainly intended to serve as guides to the evolving soul, at times they have to give way to the demands of the sincere heart. It will not be denied that the masses can more easily grasp the significance of this great truth by being told this incident in the Paramahansa's life than by an abstract exposition of the truth. Sri Ramakrishna's admonition to a disciple (who allowed himself to be cheated to a little extent by a petty shop-keeper) that a devotee must not be a fool, his retort to another disciple (who came leaving something behind and argued that he was too much lost in contemplation to remember it) that he himself never failed to remember things in spite of almost unbroken meditation on the Supreme, his reply to his brother about the futility of bread-winning education, his throwing back a quantity of opium into the owner's room because he took it from the servant and not the owner, his passion for visits to the pious men, his peculiar relations with his teachers and his wife, his all-consuming love for his disciples, his determination not to continue his pilgrimage unless

the hungry people in a place were fed by Mathuranath, his cleansing the abode of a low-caste man by way of discipline to achieve true humanity, his practice of Islam and Christianity—these are a few of the thousand details of his life which are full of meaning and spiritual significance. The secret of the great popularity of M.'s Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna lies in the fact that besides reproducing for us the immortal utterances of the Master, it makes Ramakrishna live before us. All those that are drawn to the universal teachings of Sri Ramakrishna are irresistibly drawn to his life too, because his life is the best and the most authoritative commentary on his teachings. It is in the nature of things therefore that those whom the Master's teachings inspire are naturally eager to know his life too, nay, even to visit the places sanctified by his stay on earth. Those who are familiar with the short but intensive life of Swami Vivekananda will easily recall similar instances in his life which are in themselves great teachings. The same is the case with all prophets.

A word of caution is necessary here. The misfortune with mankind is that as days pass the letter is held to be more important than the spirit, the chaff is adored while the grain is left by. Very often people continue to pay homage to a great prophet without in the least acting up to his principles. There is nothing intrinsically harmful in the adoration we pay to the personality, but deterioration sets in when we stop there, and fail to see the real purpose behind the personality. It is like resorting for a bath to a river bed, long after the drying up of the river. That the Buddha came to be adored as a Saviour was

quite consistent with human nature; but it is real blasphemy to sing praises to the Saviour when we break his commandments every hour of the day. So long therefore as adoration does not descend into blind worship, so long as the prophet's message and mission are not lost sight of, there is no danger in our being delighted with the personality as much as with the principle.

Different devotees have varying temperaments, and there are many who choose a prophet as their Ideal; their way of salvation lies through intense devotion to and constant meditation on the great master whom they have elected as their guide. To such men there often arises an almost insurmountable difficulty. The prophet who is their all in all, whose tiniest deed has ever-expanding meaning for them is often pronounced to be a myth by eminent thinkers whose conclusions cannot easily be brushed away as figments of the imagination. Among the great prophets the Buddha and Muhammad are quite historical personages. But the great preacher of the Gita, Krishna, is said to be unhistorical. Rama and Sita who are the very backbone of Hindu tradition and culture are also said to be so. Christ also shares the same fate at the hand of many critical historians. Everyone knows how Rama, Sita and Krishna have entered into Hindu life. But is it sanity to be adoring personages that never lived except in the fancies of poets? With us Hindus at least, the problem is not very acute; for after all, allegiance to Krishna or Rama is no necessary element of the faith we profess. One may reject Rama and yet be a very honest Hindu. But what is the case with Jesus? Christianity is founded on

Jesus, on his personality. And where is Christianity to go, if the very foundation is knocked off? The unhistoricity of Jesus is therefore bound to be a very troublesome thorn on the side of the Christian believer and devotee. Is he then to give up Jesus? Is it easy to give up the holy bondages of a life-time? How heart-rending must it be to tear oneself away from the Chosen Ideal? To acquire faith is hard enough, and if it is to be disturbed by an attack on its very basis all cheer goes away from life. The light that sustained the mind is extinguished, and the soul withers.

The problem of the historicity of prophets needs then to be enquired into.

We must first remember that history as is known to us does not cover the whole of human existence. Man is a very old inhabitant of the earth, and if there are pre-historic periods in the story of his stay on earth, certainly those periods were not periods of no activity. Only, our knowledge of them is limited. Moreover, as new fields are taken up for research, we are often compelled to revise our pet conclusions and change our present estimate of men and things. We must therefore always be open to fresh convictions. What we assert to-day may not be the final word on problems.

And then, man is by nature so very self-contained that he has a tendency to disbelieve what he does not know or cannot comprehend. To him the proof of reality is his own understanding or conviction. And so, fed by reason as he is, he is unable to believe that the miracles attributed to the prophets, and the extraordinary incidents recorded in their lives could at

all have happened. But it has to be remembered that the field of the prophets' activities is one in which inspiration, intuition, etc., play a prominent part. That field is not super-natural in the sense of being unnatural; it is super-natural, because it is beyond the nature that we comprehend, with our limited vision. The critic must therefore hesitate to pass judgment on a matter whose laws are unknown to him. When worldly-minded men say that the prophets could never have lived such brilliant lives as they are credited with, we must not be upset, for they speak without authority.

There is a vein of scepticism in man. There is a tendency in him to doubt the veracity of any reported extraordinary happening. So when he hears that Jesus performed a deed which he can never dream of doing, he merely laughs at the idea. He gives a bad name to what he is unwilling to concede. But many such sceptics have been redeemed by a study of the life of Sri Ramakrishna. The great merit of the example of the Paramahansa is its recency. Men who have seen him still live amidst us. He has been tested 'as coins are tested by money-changers', by persons like Vivekananda who could not be hypnotised or fooled by pretensions. The Paramahansa has not now become a fabled personage described in dim books of doubtful authenticity. And in his life we see again and again experiences which seem too very astounding for ready belief. But yet we know they were real. It is quite possible that a few centuries later men may disbelieve in some of these real experiences of the great prophet of Dakshineswar. When they read for example, that

this God-man was completely immersed in divine consciousness throughout life, that he practised all the difficult *Sadhanas* (spiritual exercises) of the several systems and reached the goal in an incredibly short time, that he combined in himself perfectly the ideal of the *sannyasin* and the householder, that extraordinary visions were common occurrences to him,—they may smile and say, "This man must undoubtedly have been great, but surely his disciples and biographers need not have claimed for him so much as is recorded here."

It must not however be thought that what is advocated here is an utter surrender of one's reasoning powers. No sane man ever pleads for unquestioning blind acceptance.

What attitude should a devotee adopt when he is told convincingly that the prophet who is his ideal is historically a myth? It melts one's heart to think of withdrawing the allegiance paid reverentially to a loved sage, but reason rebels against continuing the allegiance in the face of the historical proof about the mythical nature of the sage. Let us take the examples of Krishna and Christ. No one can historically prove that Krishna ever lived, but yet Krishna is more real to the Hindu mind than many a historical personage whose doings are recorded in books and stones. So too do many souls in the West seek and derive unceasing solace from the Son of Man and feel themselves blessed by the love they bear to Jesus. It is cruel, to say the least, to tell these people that their devotion is founded on a falsehood. Life to many will to-day have no meaning without Christ, while Krishna can never be banished from

the Hindu home. So too are Rama and Sita not fabled personages, but real living guides to millions of Hindus.

Prophets have a two-fold reality—a historical reality and a spiritual reality. Historically Jesus may never have lived, but this fact does not in the least detract from his spiritual reality. For Jesus and Krishna are spiritual ideals. They represent an idea, the idea of perfected beings. That idea is eternally true, unchangingly real. A person known as Jesus the earth may never have borne on its bosom, but the men who conceived the idea of a Jesus were as great as the conceived Jesus. Krishna may be a pure myth, but the thinkers who pictured a Krishna must surely have been gifted with all the greatness we credit Krishna with. Just as a poem is only an expression of the soul of a poet, just as a painter transforms his genius to the picture he paints, so too is the conceiver of a grand ideal, himself the ideal personified. What we are not we can never create. Of course as intelligent students of history we must decide the question in a sane manner, but as spiritual aspirants, even an unhistorical Jesus may conveniently be our ideal. The sublime teachings of Jesus could not have been uttered by common men without spiritual vision. The grand conception of Krishna, the ideal *Karma-Yogi*, the philosopher who could preach religion on the field of battle and remain calm amidst stormy activities, could not have been the work of a petty mind. Jesus might never have lived, but if he was merely a creation of the Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, these saints were themselves Jesus. If Krishna was only the creation of Vyasa, then Vyasa had all the greatness Krishna



is credited with. If Valmiki created a Rama, Valmiki himself must have been an ideal man? What does it matter whether the great man is called Valmiki or Rama? Names do not count in the spiritual field; the substance and not the name, is the thing that is important.

To the aspirant in the spiritual realm, therefore, the historicity of a prophet is at best a matter of academic interest. The question has no reference to the spiritual relation between him and the prophet. Historians may quarrel about the date of a prophet's advent, about the place of his birth, about his very existence, but their conclusions do not affect the spiritual reality of the prophet. It was because Jesus was to him real and living that St. Francis of Assisi got the stigmata. It was again because Rama and Hanuman were living personalities that Ramakrishna during the period of *Sadhana* in the mood of Hanuman had for a time his coccyx enlarged. Jesus and Rama

may or may not be real to the common people, but to St. Francis and Ramakrishna they were nothing but real. And what did the world's opinion matter to them so long as they got their redemption through Jesus and Rama? Spiritual life is intensely lonely and individualistic. Spiritual march can never be done in groups. In the words of a great thinker, God never addresses congregations but ever speaks in secret to the individual soul. The aspirant need not therefore time his march and decide his pace with reference to popular opinions and group convictions. He must determine what is good for him primarily with reference to his own tastes and needs. If an 'unhistorical' Jesus or a 'legendary' Krishna appeals to him, the proper course for him is to choose either as his guide. For spiritually, both are real, both are the perfect embodiment of a saving ideal, and both are bound to lead aspirants on to the cherished goal of life.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**The Basic Conception of Buddhism :**  
*By Vidhushekhar Bhattacharya. Published by the University of Calcutta, 1934.*

The Adharchandra Mukerjee Lectures delivered in 1932 by Prof. Vidhushekhar Bhattacharya have been published under the above caption. The learned professor, who is considered to be an authority on Buddhist canonical works in their originals, has very ably presented the problem Buddha had before him and the solution he gave for the cessation of suffering "which follows the extinction of desire, as declared by the sages of the Upanishads."

In the first Lecture the author gives a bird's eye view of the religious and philosophical speculation in the country before Buddha came. The place of Buddha as

an original thinker was not new. "Quite independent of Vedic tradition new paths of solution attracted people. There were ascetics holding different religious views and practising severe forms of austerities or self-mortification." Buddha was an "out and out rationalist." The following direction of Buddha regarding the enquiry into Truth is worth reproduction: "As the wise take gold by cutting, burning and rubbing it (on a piece of loadstone), so, O Bhikkus, you are to accept my words, having examined them and not merely out of your regard for me." "A Bodhisatva rests on reason (Yuktisara) and not on a person (Pudgalasara), though things might be explained by an Elder (Sthavira) or an experienced man, or Tathagatha, or the Order (Sangha). Thus resting on

reason and not on a person, he does not move away from the Truth, nor does he follow the path of others."

Buddha was silent regarding the nature of the Ultimate Truth. On this point the Exalted One says, "I do not quarrel, O Bhikkus, with the people. But it is the people who quarrel with me. One, O Bhikkus, who speaks the truth, does not quarrel with any one." If in Buddha's life time there were differences of opinion, it is no wonder that subtle hair-splitting differences were enlarged into different metaphysical schools after Buddha's Parinirvana. Apart from these implications, the doctrine Buddha preached is an invitation for every one "to come and see for himself."

The teachings of Buddha were taken variously by various people according to their mental calibre. The two main schools were formed by Yogacaras or Vijnanavadins and Madhyamikas or Sunyavadins. The Madhyamikas aver that the idealism of Vijnanavadins is only a concession to middling intellects who are afraid of the doctrine of "voidness," "being not able to understand it thoroughly." Prof. Bhattacharya, in summarising the Madhyamika position, says, "The teaching of the Master that the world of our everyday experience exists is meant only for those foolish and childlike persons who are strongly attached to the existence of the world and are frightened even to hear of the profound and subtle truth. But those who have a better intellect, but are yet ill-witted, are taught that all this is only pure consciousness (Vijana), there being neither the perceiver nor the perceptible. And those whose minds are freed from all sorts of impurities by profound meditation for years are advised that all this is just like an imaginary town in the sky (Gandharvanagara)."

In the second Lecture, the author very neatly explains where Upanishadic and Buddhist thoughts meet and diverge. The Prajnaparamita of Buddhism and the Jnana of Vedanta are identical in that they agree that wisdom dawns when desires are burnt up, when Ahamkara and Mamata go or, in Buddhist language, when the Skandhas are dissolved away. With regard to the content of their know-

ledge, both the schools are diametrically apart "in their conclusions." According to Vedanta, when Ajnana vanishes the Self alone exists. The Buddhist doctrine denies the Self as the final ground of experience. We wish Prof. Bhattacharya had been a bit more explicit in explaining the concept of the Vedantic Self. The Vedantic Self can never become an object of experience. Then it would become a Drsyavastu or Skandha-environed, and as such it is unreal. The significance of Buddha's silence about the ultimate reality is also the same. This conclusion becomes very much substantiated when an authority on the subject like Prof. Bhattacharya says, "It seems to me that it is the Upanishadic doctrine of Self that led him (Buddha) to arrive at such a decision (Anatman). Desires cause suffering and desires are hubbed in Self, which is illusory and on analysis evaporates into nothingness. But the Vedantic characterisation of the Ultimate as Satchidananda is only a hint at the unhintable by suggesting that the Ultimate is not Asat, Achit or Niranandam. The empirical self, caught up in Skandhas, is explained by Buddha as having a dependent origination (Pratityasamutpada) and the propelling force to give it movement is Trishna." All questions relating to individuality are solved by dependent origination and no room is left for intervention of Self." The final decision on this philosophical system we get in Visuddhimagga. "Only Sorrow is there, but not an afflicted man. There is action, but not agent. There is Nirvana, but not one who realises it. And there is a way, but not he who goes thereby."

Buddha heightened the individual status of man to find out his own ultimate destiny. In his parting advice to Ananda, the Exalted One consoling him said, "The Truths and the Rules of the Order which I have set forth and laid down for you all, let them, after I am gone, be the teacher of you". Prof. Bhattacharya compares this to the light supplied by Vedic Rishis and their saying that the sense of the hymns has to be constructed by the help of oral tradition as well as reasoning.

**Psycho-Therapy (Its Doctrine and Practice):** By Elizabeth Severn, PH. D., Published by Rider & Co., Paternoster House, London, E.C. Pages 211.

This book is written in an engaging and forcible style, and it carries conviction as the author has based her statements on her own experiences in dealing with patients. A long list of cures attempted or completed is given at the end as well as in the course of different chapters to illustrate particular points. She has clearly explained how colour and music have great therapeutic value; and one who has observed the arrangement of coloured silks, flowers and lights or chanting and music in temples or churches cannot help reading a curative value into them after reading this book and connecting them as the legitimate causes of the consolation, comfort and "freedom" many a devotee gets from these institutions. She has also stressed the fact that unless one dives deep into one's own soul and "touches" the Source of all life, the mere observance of the technique of cure will avail nothing. This is illustrated by the case of one healer herself who went to the author for treatment, being "broken down" as a result of having spent all her energy in curing other people and not having cared to "re-charge" herself by proper detachment and meditation.

Psycho-therapy is not simply a cure of small illnesses. From a wider standpoint, as the author shows, it can be called a "rational religion" calculated to "appeal to rational thinkers as well as to the more essentially spiritually-minded." Many religions, she says, have centered the mind around self-abnegation and denial, while others have preached activities and individualism to the point of excluding God from the universe. But in modern metaphysical thought, of which psycho-therapy is an applied branch, there is a certain procedure outlined for the individual, which makes a solution of the problem of evil possible for him. In this system, the self is made the "hypothetical centre of the universe, the microcosm of the macrocosm; and in this realisation of the Self, as opposed to a personalised but absent God, lies the secret of its power." "The ultimate origin of all sin and dis-

ease and suffering is felt to be in the human sense of separateness from that divine life called God. The individual in repeating 'I am,' as he is often taught to do, is but using a new way to realise what sometimes seems so hard to realise, the unity of all life."

This book thus gives a most dignified and comprehensive exposition of the art of "psycho-therapy," and we wish it a very wide circulation.

**Mystical Psychology:** By R. Dimadale Stocker. Published by Messrs. N. Fowler & Co., London. Pages 112.

This is a small book dealing with mysticism under certain heads intended avowedly by the author to serve as an appeal on its behalf to the common sense reader. In the first chapter, 'Life's Solitudes and Silences,' the author seeks to make out on high authority that religion is what the individual experiences in his solitariness and proceeds ultimately from one source, the craving for union,—the manifestation of the will to completeness. In the second chapter, dealing with the psychological aspect of mysticism, stress is laid on the ultimate aim of life and the need of the doctrine of non-attachment in our psychological scheme. Poetry, according to the third chapter of this book, is not merely an outlet for otherwise unutilised tendencies; rather it is a mode of life,—the only mode in which these tendencies view objects wherein and whereby to discover the multitudinous possibilities of evolution. In the fourth chapter the fundamental difference between spiritualism and mysticism has been elucidated. The next two chapters are only elaborations of the ideas in the previous ones. To those familiar with Vedantic thought, the exposition in this book may appear elementary. But to the large numbers of those unfamiliar with Vedantic thought or mysticism as expounded by Western philosophers in the light of modern thought, this book ought to be of immense help as an easily understandable introduction to further study of an interesting and useful subject.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Sri Ramakrishna Centenary at Bombay

The Birth-Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna is being celebrated in different ways in various parts of India, but the celebration held by the Ramakrishna Mission, Bombay has an appropriateness of its own derived from the very successful sessions of the Parliament of Religions organised in connection with the occasion. That a function like this should attract unusually big audiences consisting of highly intellectual and influential sections of citizens indicates that even in a city like Bombay, where, for all outside appearances, modernism, industrialism and materialism are in full swing, there flows an undercurrent of religious piety which is characteristic of India's national life.

Not a little of the success and popularity of the Parliament was due to the fact that its sessions were presided over by the distinguished Indian scholar and philosopher, Sir S. Radhakrishnan. In fact during its three days sittings, commencing from the 5th of May, the most outstanding events were the opening and concluding addresses of Sir S. Radhakrishnan, giving a masterly survey of the spiritual problems of modern humanity with special reference to conditions obtaining in India. Beginning with a reference to the great influence of Sri Ramakrishna on modern thought, the learned Professor declared that the speciality of his message consisted in putting religious views to the test by the logic of life, and establishing the equality of all religions through example and precept. Proceeding with his survey of the wider world-problems he said that there was a conceit of ignorance and a conceit of knowledge. The happenings in the world—the victory achieved by the sword, and the great calamities that visited mankind—must make them think seriously whether beneath all this there was any fundamental spiritual assurance, whether there was anything real behind this apparently transient. In modern times there were conceited men of knowledge who claimed to provide solutions for all problems and claimed to dispel the great mystery of life. But if today people thought themselves more

enlightened, the barbarians too had their sense of enlightenment, but the latter had their sense of the mysterious too. Science put an end to this mystery and they became prosaic. Man in the East recognised this mystery and did not worry about its cause but carried on the quest to attain truth and enlightenment. But the westerner proceeded to explore all aspects of reality and if they did not find a satisfactory explanation, they were puzzled. In spite of all the sacrificial efforts of the westerner why was it that he was unable to translate aspirations into reality of universal decency, freedom, justice and equality? It was because he mistook religion as mere Panditya, as an intellectual dogma which remained untranslated into action, and not as an intuitive apprehension of Reality possible for all who made an effort in that direction. Therefore intellectual progress had not touched the fundamental weaknesses of mankind, and we have the strange experience of people caring scrupulously for the hygiene of their bodies but neglecting the hygiene of the soul. So long as these germs were there, wars were inevitable. It was the war in the soul of man, the split and dissention in the inner self, that left mankind nothing more than a horde of clever animals.

The remedy for this state of affairs consisted in Ramakrishna's conception of religion—namely, the practice of the presence of God. This mystical tradition recognised the scriptures, but their music could not be expressed in words. The silent worship when one was in communion with God was an experience which provided a negative explanation of the existence of the Supreme Power. Although man might attempt a logical embodiment of this supreme truth, it was, however, transcendental and refused to be defined by formulas and categories. But simply because one did not find a suitable empirical embodiment for the Fundamental Reality, it was improper to discard it as non-existent. Spiritual matters could be comprehended by spirituality, and man by virtue of the Divine Spark in him could apprehend the Supreme Truth, even if he

could not comprehend it. If man's highest category was Purusha (person), then the Supreme Reality could be described as Uttama Purusha which supplemented the characteristics of the human being. All religions took their stand on this supreme truth.

In the last address he delivered before the session of the Parliament, he traced the difference between India and the West to their attitude towards change. Like the ancient Greek, the West kept an open mind without shutting out new ideas whereas India, like the Egyptian priest, represented orthodoxy, a long memory of the past pressing down on her consciousness. When religion in this country was progressive, the Indian possessed mental resilience, and flexibility and elasticity of temper. In every age there were reformers who were repudiated by orthodoxy. Sankaracharya who was today acclaimed the champion of orthodoxy was in his days denounced as a heretic by Mandanamisra. India found herself in a condition of stagnation today because she gave up that instinctive attitude of challenge to authority, of rebellion against things repugnant to reason.

But this did not mean the giving up of religion in the hope that this would solve all problems as some people believed. For even if all the worldly needs of men were satisfied, they could not remain contented like cattle. In every man there was the dream of a higher life. So long as higher aspirations existed in man, so long as there was in him a perpetual endeavour, a ceaseless striving for something higher, nobler and better, man could not but be a religious being. The failure of religion in the past was the failure of organised religions—the outcome of the efforts of priests who had no real insight into truth. God never addressed congregations. Each individual had to establish a private communion with Him. Beneath all different variations and details, religions had one authentic voice calling for universal compassion. Great religious teachers never said that if a man did not accept their respective teachings, he would be doomed. The basic truth was laid down in every religion that the performance of good to humanity constituted a true religious life.

We shall not give here in detail the other speeches delivered at the Parliament. All the three days the Cowasji Jehangir Hall was full to capacity, and the representatives of all the great world religions addressed the audience, giving their "interpretation of the messages of prophets in an atmosphere of amity and harmony, goodwill and understanding." On an impartial and critical mind these religions would leave the general impression that while there were inconsistencies and divergences among them, there was behind them all the consciousness of a common purpose, the eternal striving of man after truth, beauty and goodness. To review the theses of the different representatives, Zoraster, the prophet of monotheism in Iran, developed the concept of an all-powerful, all-knowing, all-pervading Ahura Mazda, and of a pure and virtuous life as consisting not in meditation but in acts of positive good to fellow beings; according to the ideal of Jesus Christ a good man was not one who performed religious ceremonies meticulously but demonstrated his goodness by his deeds; the prophet of Islam taught the unity of Truth and the need for universal tolerance, and advocated a religious ideal having the service of man and the brotherhood of all as its ideal; Judaism agreed with all religions in its fundamental tenet of serving the One God and humanity, but differed from them all by being inextricably bound up with the history of the Jewish people; the ideal of Hinduism was to march ahead, to stop man from hating man, to teach the control of the mind, and to recognise the reality and the supremacy of spiritual values underlying all their differences in philosophy, mythology and rituals; Jainism was as old as any other Indian religion, and its ethical code coupled with its highly disciplined routine of life deserved careful consideration; Buddhism, besides teaching non-violence, universal love, service of mankind, equality and brotherhood, had the spiritual development of man through individual effort as its outstanding aspect; Bahaism stressed the unity of all religions and all countries; Theosophy was the soul of all religions, accepting the truth in them and rejecting the falsehood, and it taught the divinity of man and how to develop it; Arya Samaj wanted to make all people

noble and held that one should seek one's own welfare in the welfare of others.

It would thus be seen that all these great religions stand for a common ideal which may be described as the development of man to his fullest possibilities both through the culture of the soul and the service of society. One might, however wonder why inspite of this, religions come into clash with one another and often degenerate into the worst forms of irreligion. This is so partly because they do not study each other with mutual sympathy and a will to agree, and partly because they fail to see that this spiritual and secular elevation of man is possible only collectively and not sectionally. Let us hope that a Parliament of this kind, held in honour of Sri Ramakrishna, the prophet of religious harmony, would go a great way in promoting mutual understanding among religions.

#### The Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Celebration in Washington, D.C.

The Vedanta Society of Washington, D.C., celebrated the centenary of the birth of Sri Ramakrishna in its own humble way, and it was a great success.

There were special services at the Society's Chapel for three consecutive days, beginning Sunday, March 8th. Visiting Swamis lectured on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. Besides there were illustrated talks on the art and culture of India. The lectures were very well attended and everyone listened with great interest.

The local newspapers co-operated in giving good publicity to the celebration. The *Washington Post*, a prominent daily, published two articles on the centenary of the birth of Sri Ramakrishna and his life and teachings. The first article which was published on Sunday, March 1st, was contributed by Mr. Pierre de Remer, a friend of the Society. The second article which appeared in the magazine section of the Sunday number of March 8th was written by the Church Editor of the paper. It was illustrated by a picture of Sri Ramakrishna and covered half a page, giving a short narrative of the Master's life and his mission. The *Daily News* also gave a write up and published the program of the celebration.

The program really started with a Radio Talk given by Swami Vividishananda over the station W. O. L. on Saturday evening, March 7th, his subject being, "The Centenary of the Birth of Sri Ramakrishna—The Great Mystic of Modern India." This talk must have been heard by a large number of Washingtonians.

#### The Mahotsav at Murshidabad

The celebration of the 8th Anniversary of the consecration of the Temple of Sri Ramakrishna at the Sargachhi Ashram came off successfully on the 10th Jaistha, the 24th May. The function began with Mangal Arati and Puja in the morning. During the noon, thousands of devotees, admirers and sight-seers coming from Calcutta, Murshidabad, Berhampore and other places of the locality were entertained with Bhajan and other songs.

The music being over, a meeting was held at 1-30 p.m., under the presidency of venerable Sreemat Swami Akhandanandaji Maharaj, the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, and a Bengali speech, regarding the lives and ideals of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, was delivered by Brahmachari Amulyakumar of Belur Math. The meeting came to a close with concluding remarks of the President.

Then a Sankirtan-party sung the holy name of Sri Krishna in chorus and satisfied the spiritual thirst of the devotees assembled there. After this about 2,500 Bhaktas and Daridra Narayanas partook of Prasadam.

#### Swami Agamananda's activities in Kerala (Nov. '35—Aug. '36)

Swami Agamananda of the Ramakrishna Mission began his lecturing tour in Travancore with an address at Vaikom, delivered at the invitation of the Asst. Devaswam Commissioner of that place on the occasion of the well-known Ashtami Festival. Since then he delivered lectures in different parts of Travancore, about 40 of them being under the auspices of the Devaswam Department and about 60 at the invitation of other bodies. Besides these he addressed also about 12 public meetings in British Malabar and 10 in Cochin State. Detailed reports of many of these lectures used to appear in the leading Malayalam papers like *Bharatapatrika*, *Malayala Rajyam*, *Matri-Bhumi*,

Gomati-Keralam, etc. While the average attendance at these lectures was above 1,000, some of them were attended by audiences consisting of more than 8,000 persons. The Swami is a gifted speaker and his lectures have been of immense value in strengthening the faith of people in Hindu religious ideals.

In the course of his lecturing work, a prominent landlord of North Travancore named Parayath Govinda Menon offered a plot of land and a building at Kaladi. Kaladi being the birthplace of Sri Sanakaracharya, he accepted the offer and started an institution named Advaita Ashrama. The Swami also started a Students' Home on a small scale at Ernakulam. This Institution is run by a local Managing Committee and an Advisory Board consisting of important citizens of Ernakulam.

#### **Ramakrishna Sevasram, Rangoon, 1935**

The Burma branch of the Ramakrishna Mission has among its other activities a charitable hospital which starting in a humble way has now become a useful institution and has completed the fourteenth year of its philanthropic career. The patients treated did not belong exclusively to the city of Rangoon, a considerable number of them coming from the suburbs and from remote districts of Burma. Irrespective of caste and creed, food, shelter and medical relief were given to all who came to its door. The total number of patients including males, females and children, that were treated in the indoor hospital was 3,746 and in the out-door department 536 per day, thus showing an appreciable increase over the previous year's numbers. But the financial position is not quite satisfactory. A new Ward and a new Laboratory have been opened during the year. The Managing Committee most fervently appeals to the generous public to contribute liberally towards the Hospital Fund, so that it may carry on its work unhampered.

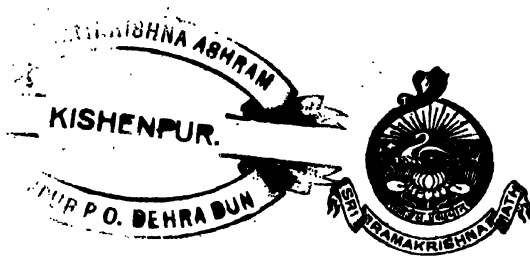
#### **The Late Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukerji**

The news of the sad and untimely death, at the early age of 46, of Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukerji, the talented Indian writer, poet

and speaker of America, has given a rude shock to all lovers of Indian culture, both at home and abroad. Born and brought up in a priestly family of Calcutta, the adventurous and ambitious spirit of Mr. Mukerji did not allow him to settle down to the dull life of a priest. With practically no money in his pocket, he left India at about the age of 20, and after a short stay in Japan, he crossed over to America. In 1914 he graduated himself at the Le Land Stanford University, and thenceforth for nearly 22 years Mr. Mukerji lived in the world of America and Europe as a true ambassador of Indian culture to the occident, lecturing at the great universities and on the public platforms of the West, and writing books in English prose which reads like poetry. He was one of the very few Indians who have written books in English for English-speaking people to read. Quite a number of his books are stories for children, and his service in this respect was recognised when he was awarded the John Newbery Medal for "the most distinguished children's book" of 1927. Of his major works for adults, the most famous is "A Son of Mother India Answers," which is a reply to Miss Mayo's notorious "Mother India," and enjoys a very wide circulation in the West.

We may mention in this connection that Mr. Mukerji was a great devotee of Sri Ramakrishna, and a warm friend of the Ramakrishna Movement, both at home and in America. He had close relations with several of the Vedanta Societies of America, and during his visits to India he used to stay at the Belur Math, the Ramakrishna Mission Headquarters. Sri Ramakrishna is the theme of his well-known book "The Face of Silence." It was this work that attracted the attention of Romain Rolland to Sri Ramakrishna and inspired him to write his book on the Great Master.

By his untimely death India has lost a great representative of her culture who had really gained the ear of the American public.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

अथैव कुरु यच्छ्रेयो मा त्वां कालोऽत्यगादयं । अकृतेष्वेव कार्येषु मृत्युर्वै संप्रकर्षति ॥  
 को हि जानाति कस्याय मृत्युः कालो भविष्यति । युवैव धर्मशीलः स्यादनित्यं खलु जीवितम् ॥  
 इदं कृतमिदं कार्यमिदमन्यत् कृताकृतं । एवमीहासुखासक्तं कृतान्तः कुरुते वयो ॥  
 दुर्बलं बलवन्तं च शूरं भीरुं जडं कविं । अप्राप्तं सर्वकामार्थान् मृत्युरादाय गच्छति ॥  
 मृत्युर्जरा च व्याधिश्च दुःखं चानेककारणं । अनुषक्तं यदा देहे किं स्वस्थ इव तिष्ठसे ॥  
 न मृत्युसेनामायान्तीं जातु कश्चित्प्रवाधते । ऋते सत्यमसत् त्याज्यं सत्ये ह्यमृतमाश्रितम् ॥  
 अमृतं चैव मृत्युश्च द्वयं देहे प्रतिष्ठितं । मृत्युरापद्यते मोहात् सत्येनापद्यतेऽमृतम् ॥  
 यस्य वाङ्मनसी स्यातां सम्यक् प्रणिहिते सदा । तपस्यागश्च सत्यं च स वै सर्वमवाप्नुयात् ॥

This day itself do what is good : let not any delay steal over you. While your plans are in making the pull of death is felt. Nobody knows to whom to-day will be the time for death. From youth itself therefore acquire the habit of righteousness. Life indeed is evanescent. This has been accomplished ; this must be done ; this another one is about to be completed—indulging in such comfortable reveries all on a sudden one is captured by Death. Death snatches away all—helpless and powerful, brave and timorous, stupid and wise—even the one who has not been able to accomplish any desired object. The body being closely wedded to death and senility, disease and misery, manifoldly caused, why are you standing still as if unconcerned ? None could ever oppose the invading hords of Death except Truth. What is false must be cast out. On Truth depends immortality. Both life eternal and death rest in the body. From inadvertence falls out death. Through truthfulness is reached the Deathless. He whose speech and thought are keen and controlled perfectly and who is endued with spiritual energy, renunciation and truthfulness—he would certainly get all.

Mahabharatha, Santi Parva, Ch. CLXXIV, 14, 16, 20, 22, 23, 28, 30 & 34.



## THE PROBLEM OF LIFE: HOW TO FACE IT?

[Three possible attitudes towards life are discussed in the following paragraphs, and an attempt is made to show that in the formation of all these attitudes, the ultimate sanction and guidance is derived from the imaginative faculty and not the logical. By imaginative faculty we do not mean the tendency to indulge in wild fancies but the non-logical and non-sensuous power of insight which becomes unerring in proportion to the purity of our being.]

### Imagination as the Basis of Higher Culture

**I**T IS a matter of universal experience that only a small stretch in the middle of life's high road is visible to the vision of man, its previous and subsequent courses at both ends being hidden from him by a thick veil of obscurity. So too is the case with the animal; it lives exclusively in the present, quite unaware of what it was before and what it will be in future. But different, as man is in many ways from the animal, there is perhaps no point in which this difference is more accentuated than in his unceasing and often unconscious struggle to overcome this limitation of the sheer present. The soul of man, like a bird in a cage, seems to be flapping its wings against the opaque encasements of life, desperately attempting to take a flight into the forbidden regions of the past and the future. However useful in traversing the extensive grounds within the prison of life, in analysing and synthesising the immediately given, these wings of reason made of intellectual fabrics, flap but in vain against the frontier fortifications of the Beyond. A form of radiant mental energy, much more powerful than reason's weak rays, is required to penetrate these thick walls and shed light on the innermost secret of existence. In ordinary parlance this faculty is described as intuition, and in its power

of certitude, its transforming effect on the deepest layers of personality and in the unitive method of its operation it stands in striking contrast with the groping superficiality and discursive functioning of reason. Only in rare individuals do we find it developed into a refined and dependable organ of psychic operation, but its raw material is universally present in the mental constitution of humanity as the power of imaginative insight.

Man is often distinguished from the animal as a rational being. While this description is true of him as an earth-bound creature, we shall be giving a truer account of his heavenly affinities if we characterise him as an imaginative being. Rationality, no doubt, elevates him from the brute, but imaginativeness brings him to the very level of God. Indeed if we investigate the part played by these two faculties in the making of man as he is to-day, we shall have to assign the more valuable share of achievement to imagination. Reason's contributions have no doubt been great, for example the exact sciences all go to its credit. Sciences bring knowledge, and knowledge is power which forms the skeleton on which the living body of a culture rests. But power in itself does not elevate man from the level of wolves and tigers; a cunning and powerful animal is yet an animal for all that. If humanity has truly raised itself above the rest

of life, it is as a result of the inner and outer graces of personality born of arts, philosophy, religion and love. To ignore these, the finest products of the application of imagination to life, would be to strip the body of culture of all its beautifying muscles and skin, and stare at the ugly skeleton, as if it were the essence of its being. By the leavening influence of imagination has man always reached out of pure materiality to the higher realms of the Spirit—to the appreciation of Beauty, to the admiration of Goodness and to the passion for Truth. At its touch has come out the finest efflorescence of love, both human and divine, and on its waxing and waning has depended the growth of fine arts like music, poetry, painting and sculpture. Even in highly complex forms of thought like religion and philosophy, where the influence of reason seems to dominate, it will be seen on closer examination that it is imagination which gives them their direction and their orientation, although they may freely use the facts and concepts of other branches of human culture. Especially does this part of imagination become conspicuous, as religion and philosophy rise progressively from purely material levels and reach the highest peaks of sublimity and inspirational quality. In short wherever the supreme values of life are concerned, imagination and not reason has been the guide of man.

### **The Imaginative Approach to Life**

Our concern in this essay is not with the part of imagination in any particular art, religion or philosophy, but with its influence on man's reaction to the totality of life, on the different types of adjustments he makes to life when faced with its alter-

nating smiles and frowns. For life, to all those who have faced it in right earnest, is the most mysterious of all problems, and man has to indent on all the resources of his head and heart to arrive at an idea of his place in it and of its significance to him. The most colossal fact in it is the presence of evil, the existence of suffering. For on the piled up bodies of the dead, the past victims of life's struggle, the proud denizens of the present strut about with light-hearted boasts of their own achievements on their lips. The bright plumage and the sweet voice of the singing bird are the consummation of agelong conflicts in Nature attended with the shrieks of victims and the extermination of countless millions of lower species of life. The stag with its majestic dignity bears on him the impress of the fears and sufferings of unnumbered generations of ancestors. Behind the comeliness of the well-developed human body or the still more admirable excellences of a chasened character lie the ugliness and lusts of the cave-man, and the long records of greed, selfishness and cruelty that have marked life at every stage of its development. The placid beauty of a moonlit night, and the gruesome desolation of the battle field; the green verdure and golden yellow of the pastures and corn fields of prosperous villages, and the parched colourless lands and the hungry inhabitants of famished areas; the beauty spots of the world where the hand of man has touched up the graces of Nature, and the earthquake and flood devastated country sides which reveal the malice and ruthless vandalism of natural forces—these are some of the striking contradictions of life that bring

man's proud reason to its knee and turn his gaze towards imagination for a solution. When he experiences the spontaneous affection of parents, the self-abnegating love of the wife or the unsuspecting trust of childish innocence, he may think life a paradise ; but the cunning and greed of the rapacious money-lender, the hypocrisy and treachery of trusted friends and relatives and the pitying indifference of self-centred neighbours would soon disillusion him and drive him to seek for a more profound adjustment with life. A childish optimism or an ostrich-like refusal to stare facts in the face is incompatible with the seriousness of the problem and has never found favour in any quarter where the power of thought has progressed to any extent. Accordingly in all ages and climes world-views or theories of life and its experiences have been propounded in order to educate man into a proper attitude and sense of relationship towards the world, especially towards the baffling alternation of good and evil, beauty and ugliness, that seems to be fundamental to it. As we have said before, in the formation of these attitudes it is not reason but imagination that has been the prime moving factor; reason may provide the bricks and wood-work of the structure, but imaginative insight with the inborn constructiveness of its nature has always been the architect.

To avoid misconception we must make it clear here that by imagination we do not mean wild fancy or the habit of building castles in the air. It is the synthesising and creative energy of human thought described as *Bhavana* in Hindu sacred literature. Just as the logical faculty, by its proper culture

and application, helps us to arrive at correct conclusions, while through want of training and misuse it leads us to false inferences, so also a properly cultivated imagination opens to us vistas of life-giving experience which cold logic is quite unaware of. But in its raw, undeveloped and impure condition imagination misguides us into day-dreams and fantasies prompted by the crude desires of animality in man. Hence it is that absolute purity of mind is insisted upon in spiritual aspirants, even as the sharpening and clarification of the intellect is necessary for one aspiring to be a logician. Even those who are sceptical in matters spiritual cannot, however, deny that the great artists of the world found in their highly developed imaginative faculty a gateway to experiences of the Real, which cannot be brushed aside as mere fantasies. By the purifying power of holiness and the one-pointedness of concentration, it can be developed into faith (*Sraddha*) and spiritual intuition which give one an insight into the true meaning and purpose of existence.

We shall now consider some of these attitudes that the imaginative insight of man has discovered when confronted with the problem of life.

### **Materialistic Stoicism**

Of these attitudes, the one that approximates most to the standards of reason and relies least on the illuminative and constructive powers of imagination is what we may describe here as the stoical attitude to life. The peculiar orientation of this line of thought consists in its predilection to reduce the wholes to their parts and to see in the building nothing more than the bricks of which it is

built. Matter is the matrix of the whole of existence, ranging from inorganic substances to the most refined form of consciousness. Whether we conceive of matter as irreducible particles or atoms as the ancients did, or as positive and negative electric charges in a highly organised form as moderns do, it does not matter very much. What is called life, consciousness and the higher spiritual values are reducible to matter and its functions. They all constitute mere epiphenomena or accidental factors in material evolution. It is not even that a purposive intelligence is at the back of this material evolution, guiding it gradually towards the production of higher and higher forms of organisation and values. Evolution is purely a resultant of mechanical forces working in their own way without the guidance of any intelligence or purposive agency. All that we call the higher products of evolution are merely the chance combinations of material energies.

It is not that such a view can be established conclusively by any deductive or inductive process. The sole justification of the conclusion is that the imagination of the thinkers of this persuasion is refined enough to grasp only the ideas of chance and mechanism. Like a heavy iron ring tied to a bird's neck, the dead weight of a world-bound intellectualism hangs heavily on their imaginative insight, preventing its flight into the higher strata of Reality.

Life and consciousness, they say, are confined to this planet of ours. In the innumerable worlds that constitute the starry heavens, there is no evidence of it anywhere else. For man, therefore, to look upon himself as the crown of evolution, to conceive

these unnumbered world systems as engaged in unrelenting labour to prepare the stage for his exalted entry, is the summit of vanity, inexcusable for its triviality as it is injurious in its consequences. The sooner the edifices built on false hopes are destroyed, the better it will be for mankind. The primacy and the eternity of the spiritual values are illusions pure and simple. The best form of self-help for humanity will be to recognise this naked truth; for then man will give up false and unrealisable ideals of life and be contented with perfection as far as it is possible in natural life, that is, reasonable opportunities for the expression and satisfaction of the instinctive, intellectual and aesthetic needs of individuals and societies. When man gives up his chase after fancies and shadows, he will succeed better in gaining these truly realisable gifts of life. Undoubtedly there is an alternation of good and evil in the experiences of life, and the heart of the universe is in every sense insensitive to the petty loves and sorrows of life. To forget that these are the inevitable accompaniments of life-process and to seek higher meanings in them is vain stupidity that may dope the mind of man, but never lead to his improvement. At least at the human level much of life's misery can be controlled and eliminated by the proper application of knowledge. But a residue of evil and the final extinction of consciousness from our planet are the unavoidable implications of life, and man has no other go but to bear the inevitable with fortitude. For what cannot be cured must be endured.

The noblest and the most fervent expression of this view in recent times is to be found in the following passage

of Bertrand Russell, one of its noted champions in our day : "Brief and powerless is man's life ; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way ; for man, condemned to-day to lose his dearest, tomorrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day ; disdaining the coward terrors of the slave of Fate, to worship at the shrine that his own hands have built ; undismayed by the empire of chance, to preserve a mind free from the wanton tyranny that rules his outward life ; proudly defiant of the irresistible forces that tolerate, for a moment, his knowledge and his condemnation, to sustain alone a weary but unyielding Atlas, the world that his own ideals have fashioned despite the march of unconscious power."

### **Spiritual Absolutism**

We next turn to another view of life gathered from an end just opposite to the one we were considering till now. If materialistic stoicism repudiates all spiritual values as illusory, spiritualistic monism does the same with matter and its expressions. The concept of matter presupposes a principle of awareness—the spirit or intelligence for which it exists. As the first step of the argument these two may be taken as separate, showing the independence of the spirit. But if spirit and matter were entirely different and therefore unlike, how is it that there is interaction between the two as it obviously is the case in all perception and in the very fact of the presence of consciousness in

living matter ? For interaction or contact is possible only between entities that have a fundamental similarity. Hence spirit and matter must at bottom be the same. Spirit then is the substratum and matter its appearance or changing aspect. In fact the whole universe which is a perpetual flux constitutes the changing mode of the spirit. Change, however, is not real ; for the real cannot come and pass away, as it obviously is the case with all changeful modes. Hence change is only an appearance, an illusion, a mere figment of the imagination ; it has as a matter of fact no foundation in the spirit. The familiar example of the serpent on the rope illustrates the point. The rope in twilight looks like a snake, and even though this phenomenon may frighten thousands of people, it still remains a rope all the while, and the snake is nowhere except in the imagination of the frightened men. In the same way the changeful world is only an appearance, and consequently unreal. To describe change as an appearance, as an unreality and as unrelated to the substratum is as good as denying it altogether. In the final step of the argument, therefore, the spirit alone is, the world never has been.

Before proceeding further we must pause to point out that in spite of the apparent reliance on reason, it is imagination that gives direction to thought here also, as will be seen when we examine two of its fundamental assumptions. In the first place when it is said that the concept of matter presupposes an intelligent principle of awareness, it may point to a difficulty of logical thinking, but does not in any way demonstrate a point of fact. For wherever we ex-

perience consciousness, it is always found to be in association with matter; consciousness independent of living matter has never been demonstrated. It may be that consciousness is the product of matter as materialists assume or spirit independent of matter as spiritualists contend. But neither view has been, nor can possibly be, demonstrated scientifically, and when we, therefore, adopt either view as the fact, we are admitting the inadequacy of reason and starting on an imaginative approach. Then again to posit a changeless substratum behind changing modes or attributes is a pure assumption unwarranted by experience, however necessary it may be for thought. For no one has experienced substance or substratum and attributes or modes separately. As in the concept of pure experienter, the idea of pure substratum only indicates that reason has abdicated its sway over thought in favour of imagination.

To proceed now to the ethical consequences of this view, it is obvious that when the world is regarded as illusory or non-existent, its values, both good and bad, also follow the same fate. The problem of evil is not so much explained as denied; for if the world is not, evil too is not. The underlying principle of the universe is no doubt not material or mechanical; but it has been so divested of all its wealth that nothing but the barest minimum of an impersonal consciousness remains. It is as insensitive to the joys and sorrows of the non-existent or illusory world as the unconscious mechanical principle of the materialist is of his real universe. This world-view will therefore exhort its votaries to recognise their identity with this Impersonal Principle and

get over both good and evil by denying the very existence of the universe. To those who can manage to do so it will certainly carry consolation; but to most the very idea may be bewildering.

How great is the demand made here on men's imagination in spite of the claim often made by the followers of this view that they rely only on reason!

### Personality as the Secret of the Universe

We next come to a view which resembles the previous one in point of its spiritual outlook and its demand on man's imagination, but differs from it in that it is intensely personalistic in its view of the Ultimate Principle and realistic in the attitude towards the world, and in that it would not tolerate the merging of life and its values in a bare impersonality. Man knows only human truth; his thought is anthropomorphic through and through. Its symbols, the brick and mortar of the structures it builds, have their source in human experience, and cannot cast aside the shape and complexion derived from it, even as man cannot jump out of himself. Accordingly our ideas of impersonality and personality are drawn from our experiences of life. We have no doubt experience of impersonal forces and entities that are mighty, sublime, beautiful or awe-inspiring. The limitless expansiveness of the ocean, the austere sublimity of a snow-capped peak, the soul-stirring mystery of the star spangled sky, the fury of a thunder-storm, the demoniac might of steam or electricity—these are some of the striking examples of impersonality that we can possibly think of. Impressive though all of

them are, they yet lack the most unique of all the categories known to us, namely, consciousness and its higher development of self-consciousness. The most developed and illuminating expression of these is personality which therefore stands for the highest value and form of existence known to us in life. In the imaginative approach to Reality, therefore, it will be more correct to think of the Supreme in symbols of personalism than of impersonalism. As the sparks of fire coming out of a railway engine that speeds along the rail-road in darkness reveals to us something about the nature of the energy that moves the train, even so the sparks of personality that illumine the gloom of life's mystery may be depended upon to give us an insight into the heart of Reality. The great dictum that the self of man is the same as the Supreme or that man is made in the image of God becomes full of meaning in the light of this idea ; for personality, the very essence of man, is a clue to the secret of Reality—a veritable gateway to an understanding of divine nature.

This does not, however, mean that the Divine is a person or an individual with head and arms as is the case with the organism of limited personalities in this world. He is on the other hand the mighty fire, the shapeless, limitless Principle of Personality itself, of which the persons or the multiple, limited personalities of this world are but dim sparks which can no doubt give us an idea of the heat and light of their source, but not certainly anything of its magnitude and configuration. All that is therefore meant by describing the Divine as personality is to show that in contrast to mere impersonal awareness,

He is positively *conscious, purposeful and responsive*, holding within Himself the reins that direct the world-process, and entering with it into all the forms of intimate relationship that sweeten the otherwise tragic life of man. Thus to attribute personality to the ultimate principle of the universe is only to describe it in terms of the highest known to us—not certainly to reduce it to an exalted human being.

Once the personalistic view of the Supreme is accepted, the outlook on the world at once gains a new orientation. We shall not enter here into the question whether the world is an emanation of God, a creation out of nothing, or merely the manipulation of a second entity beside himself ; whatever might be our opinion on this question, on one point all the personalistic conceptions of the Supreme unitedly stand in opposition to the view of it as an impersonal, changeless substratum. Being the expression of the creative will of Divine Personality, the world process in this view is not unreal as in the other. It is either a projection of God or it is His handiwork. The personalist is at one with the materialists in staunchly maintaining the reality of the world, but whereas for the materialists the world is merely a mechanical and purposeless chance-product of blind matter's evolution, to be enjoyed when it yields enjoyment and to be endured when it burdens life with woes, it becomes for the personalist a grand and glorious process big with a unique purpose, for the realisation of which he and his fellow-being are laboriously marching along the mountain roads of life, now walking on the sunlit tops of hills, now passing through dangerous gorges with avalanches and giant boulders threatening life from above.

But in the thickest gloom of despair as well as in the frenzied joys of sensuous life he sees the guiding, steady hand of God.

### Faith as the Supreme Healer of Life's Woes

The workings of the divine will may appear strange and mysterious, nay, perplexing and distracting at times. For what guilt, say, for example, was yonder child born blind and burdened with a deadly disease, pre-destined as it were to lead an accursed life? Why did that middle-aged man, the sole bread-winner of his numerous family, pass away suddenly, leaving behind so many souls destitute and stranded in life? And why again did the messengers of death snatch away in his prime of life, that promising young man, just starting life and settling down after his marriage—thus undoing at one stroke all the laborious care and attention that his parents had bestowed on his education and upbringing, and pulling down in a twinkling of the eye the picturesque edifice of sweet fancies and tender hopes that the touch of fresh love had raised in the heart of his newly wedded wife? As if there is not round about an abundance of human scrape heap, the aged and the infirm, the imbecile and the incurably sick, for death to levy its tribute! Granting the inevitable facts of death and suffering, why should Nature function in a manner that is wantonly wasteful? Even from its swaddling cloth humanity has been vainly raising this question and will continue to raise it, perhaps as profitlessly as in the past, until it is on its death bed. It has also no doubt administered to itself an abundance of self-made pills,

potions and palliatives to sooth its aching heart. Look facts in the face, and endure manfully what you cannot avoid—says the stoical materialist. A good advice, indeed, if the mere fact of inevitableness can endow us with the fortitude to stand the onslaught. It is all an illusion—says the illusionist. The philosopher may feel satisfied with it while he is yet philosophising, but the plain man, staggering under the weight of suffering, feels it like a club-beating on his fractured skull. It is Karma—points out the learned theologian. To those who are benumbed in their spirit it may give the satisfaction of fatalistic resignation, but to one whose soul is still quivering with animal vitality it can hardly mean anything.

Before this baffling problem all systems, as long as they speak in the language of logic, cry out only in vain in the insensitised ear of suffering humanity. Faith, reborn from the ashes of reason at the touch of creative imagination, is the only leavening force that can act on the drooping spirit of man. It alone constitutes the ballast that can keep the boat of human life in steadiness. Faith may not explain the problem of suffering in reason's language, but it provides the soul with a perennial source of vigour and enlightenment. Endowed with it alone can man face with unruffled fortitude the buffets of adversity and the allurements of life's seducing joys. Under its influence he learns that he is being shaped on the anvil of the Most High. Even in the midst of terrible ordeals of life, he sees with the enlarged vision which faith bestows on him, that all the processes in the Cosmic Smithy's workshop, be it subjection to the withering heat of the furnace, to the ringing blows of



the hammer or to the cooling influence of water—all have a distinctive bearing on the perfection of his being, a part to play in eliciting the best that is in him.

He sees too that the best and the holiest of men have also been the greatest of sufferers. Who among us, common mortals, has suffered more than a Rama or a Sita, a Yudhishtira or a Draupadi? They were the best and the most respected of their kind, who always did good to their fellow-beings, feared God and ever walked in the path of righteousness. Yet what insults, persecutions and scourgings of poverty and grief did they not undergo—these sons and daughters of the greatest kings of their day? Then again which suffering mortal can say that the portion of his sorrow in life exceeds the sufferings of a Christ or a Ramakrishna? The one was killed on the Cross amidst humiliation and ridicule, and the other died inch by inch through a prolonged and agonis-

ing illness. Nevertheless they were the holiest and purest of men and acclaimed as the Sons of God and the saviours of mankind. No stain of sin, no burden of Karma can possibly account for the bitter cup of misery that they had to drink to its very dregs. If man would but lift his eyes from his constant preoccupation with the sores on his own body, and look straight in the countenance of these great ones, the veritable epitomes of human history, he will find a new trap-door in his heart opening, and from it will emerge a new attitude towards life before which the puzzle and poignancy of suffering will undoubtedly be dispelled. It is said the Deity himself lived among men as these great saviours and bore all the trials and tribulations that life is heir to. What God can suffer, cannot man, his humble votary, *endure*? But then it requires the eye of faith, not the laborious gropings of ratiocination to discover the life-giving messages of these great ones.

## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

*By A Disciple*

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was both wife and nun at the same time. Though noted for her great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped like a Goddess by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of this great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of every-day life.]

**N**OTHER time, a few disciples of the Holy Mother, living in the same village, formed a party, and we all went to Jayrambati. After reaching the place I said to myself, "I have not been able to achieve anything in my life. I would have thought myself very fortunate if I

could render any personal service\* to the Mother." Later, my other friends went to Kamarpukur, but I did not accompany them. In the evening, I went to the Mother. She

\* Among the Hindus it is considered a great spiritual virtue to render personal service to one's own religious teacher.

was seated in the verandah of the store-room. She asked me to bring the jar of flour from the store-room and I gladly obeyed her. She took some flour on a tray, asking me to knead it. In the evening I went to see her again. She was resting in her own room. I sat near her. After a few minutes the Mother said to me, "Vaikuntha, my child, will you kindly massage my feet gently?" As I was doing so she asked, "Why have the other children not yet returned from Kamarpukur? Have they taken a wrong road?" She became very anxious about them and requested Brahmachari Gnan to look for them. They had really taken a wrong road that night, and if the Brahmachari had not gone out for them, they would have been very late in returning to Jayrambati.

At night we all slept on the porch of the outer house. All of us got up from sleep at four o'clock in the morning, and one of us said, "If we could only see the Mother at this auspicious hour of the dawn!" He suddenly began to sing a song, the first line of which was: 'O gracious Mother, open the door of Thy room.' No sooner did the song end than we saw the Mother standing at the wide-open door of her room. This was beyond our greatest expectation. In great joy we prostrated before her. She went inside and again closed the door.

On another occasion I asked the Mother, "Please do something for my spiritual illumination." The Mother said, "There are in the Math children of Sri Ramakrishna like Sarat and Rakhal. Why should you fear anything?"

Disciple: Mother, it is my great desire to live in Belur Math for some time.

Mother: I don't think you should go to the Math now. Better stay at home.

I went to Bagh Bazar to pay my respects to the Holy Mother. When she asked me if I had met Master Mahashya,\* I said to the Mother that I did not know him.

Mother: He is downstairs. Go and prostrate before him. He is a noble soul.

The Mother asked Golap-ma to accompany me and to introduce me to Master Mahashya. I paid my respects to him and again returned to the Mother. I saw two devotees prostrating before her, and then going downstairs. The Mother was seated on her bed in the Chapel. She was muttering to herself, "Any one and every one touches me and gives me pain."

At one time I quarrelled with my elder brother on account of our family affairs. I thought of leaving home and going elsewhere for a few days and accordingly came to Bagh Bazar for the Holy Mother's permission. After hearing my story, she said to Golap-ma, "Well, Golap, Vaikuntha has been slapped by his elder brother, and out of pique Vaikuntha has come to me. Is it not natural to have a little quarrel in the family? Why should one make a mountain out of a mole-hill?" She said to me, "Return home my child. It is perfectly natural to have a little altercation when people live in a family."

One day I was sorely afflicted in my mind and coming to Udbodhan

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\* One of the intimate household disciples of Sri Ramakrishna and the author of his Gospel.

said to the Mother, "Mother, I have something to tell you."

Mother : Tell me what it is.

Disciple : When, Mother, will you be gracious to this, your unfortunate child ?

Mother : My child, Sri Ramakrishna will bless you. Pray to him. Besides keep the company of holy men and continue in your spiritual practices. You will realise everything by praying to Sri Ramakrishna.

Disciple : I have done enough of that, but have got no result. I never met Sri Ramakrishna. How can I pray to him ? I have received your grace. If you would like it, you may pray to Sri Ramakrishna for this unlucky child.

Mother : How can you achieve anything without prayer and meditation ? One must pass through these disciplines.

Disciple : Mother, my heart is not in these things. I do not get any result from meditation or Japa. Passion, anger, delusion are still in me, in the same measure as they were before. My mind has not become purer, even in the slightest degree.

Mother : My child, all impurities will go away through the repetition of God's name. How can you expect to get any result without spiritual exercises ? Don't be foolish. Repeat the name of God whenever you find leisure. Always pray to Sri Ramakrishna.

Disciple : No, Mother, I have lost all power of prayer. When I sit for meditation my mind becomes extremely restless. Either make my devotion at the feet of God steadfast so that my mind may not be stricken with any evil thought, or please take back the sacred word you asked me to repeat. I do not want to bring you

trouble for nothing. It is said that the teacher must suffer for any lapse on the part of the disciple.

Mother : How foolish you are ! I am becoming restless on your account. Sri Ramakrishna showered his blessings on you long ago.

As the Mother said these words, tears trickled down her cheeks. She continued with great emotion, "All right. You need not repeat the sacred Mantram." She meant to say that she would do everything for me, but then I could hardly understand the significance of her words. I was stricken with fear. My head began to spin. I thought that that was perhaps the end of all relationship between me and the Holy Mother. I said with great earnestness, "Mother, so you have deprived me of everything. What shall I do now ? Am I, Mother, about to descend into hell ?" The Mother said with great emphasis, "What can you mean, my child ? Can you ever, being my child, go to hell ? \* \* \* \* \*"

Disciple : Then, Mother, what shall I do now ?

Mother : Leave aside all anxiety, giving complete responsibility to me. Always remember that there is some one behind you who in proper time will enable you to realise the goal of life.

Disciple : Mother, I feel so safe as long as I live with you. No thought of worldliness can touch my mind. But no sooner do I go home than all improper thoughts afflict me. Then I again fall in the company of my old friends and perform many improper deeds. In spite of my efforts, I cannot make my mind free from evil thoughts.

Mother : This is due to the impressions of the works of your past life.

One cannot forcibly make oneself free from these tendencies. Keep the company of holy men. Try to improve your mind. You will achieve everything in course of time. Pray to Sri Ramakrishna. I am

always by your side. Remember you are already liberated in this life. Do not be afraid of anything. Sri Ramakrishna will do everything for you in the proper time.

## FROM MYSTICISM TO TECHNIQUE

*By Dr. Charles Baudouin*

[Dr. Charles Baudouin, the author of the famous book entitled "Suggestion and Auto-suggestion," is the disciple of Emile Coue and the best scientific exponent of the Nancy School of Psychology founded by Coue. He is the Director of the International Institute of Psychologie and the Editor of its journal *Action et Pensée*. In the present article he shows the fallacy of the modern tendency to dub mysticism as a peculiarity of the primitive human mind and to discover in art, philosophy, science and technique respectively progressive advancements of the human spirit from its primitive mystical susceptibilities.]

### I

I AM tempted to distinguish five states of spiritual substance, or otherwise stated, five climates pertaining to the spirit. They would place themselves in a continuous series beginning with mysticism and leading to technique. The terms mysticism, lyricism, thought, objectivity, and technique will define them sufficiently well. To those states will correspond those activities which we mean by the words, religion, art, philosophy, science and vocation respectively.

### II

In this series one recognises without difficulty the principle underlying the arrangement, by which we go from the interior to the exterior, from the spiritual to the material, from the intensive to the extensive.

### III

If one considers the magical arts of primitive peoples, and should think that this magical activity has been described as being of a technical order, one would at once see that in magic

the two extremes are found together and that they meet. Otherwise stated, one could say that the whole of the spirit is already present in magic, only there it exists as a confused and undifferentiated mass. The evolution of the spirit in the course of centuries of culture is no other than the enlargement and separation of this confused mass. It is the screen which unfolds itself. Thus the intermediate terms make their appearance.

### IV

How does this unfolding take place? One sees that the intermediate terms could be constituted of elements borrowed in part from another; thus one would see that a certain science would come naturally out of technique and from "*savoir-faire*," but on the other hand one would see also that the great scientific edifices are the result of philosophy. We know that art arises out of religion, but it originates also out of practical vocations, and therefore out of technique. One sees also that if we should arrange from left to right the five terms from mysticism to technique, each term

appears to be helped to liberate itself from the term which is to its left by the action of the term which is to its right, which, as it were, draws it to itself: philosophy frees itself out of mysticism and from the long tale of cosmogony, to the extent that science drags it in the opposite direction. Science in its turn frees itself more and more from philosophy, to the extent that technique compels it to concrete applications.

Thus do division and separation take place by means of diverse and whirling movements; but on the whole, it would well appear that the direction of the current is from the left to the right, i.e., from mysticism to technique, as if mysticism were the burning centre, the second nebula from which the other terms are thrown out one after another in order that they may take form: one could very well see mysticism expanding into a poetic state and this in turn developing itself into wisdom, and wisdom extending its domain in science, emitting infinite technicalities.

## V

This at least is the view, which implicitly or explicitly finds respect with our contemporaries; but even to suppose that it is irreproachable makes them fall into erroneous interpretations. They conclude that mysticism is a primitive term and that technique is a term most evolved, and as they take it for granted that evolution is synonymous with progress, their esteem increases for the different terms to the extent that one goes towards the right; and they have nothing but a condescending disdain for the earlier terms to the left. This view is faulty and would appear as

such as soon as we should remember that technique was there present even from the start; all that one is justified in saying would be that technique decanted itself out of mysticism, and that this is a progress for technique; but one should see that on its part likewise mysticism is purified of everything that has come out from it. A decisive stage in such a process of purification is marked by the abandonment of utilitarian prayer as has been proposed by Jesus in the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mathew: "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him." And this purification is evidently a progress for mysticism.

## VI

One has to take hold of both the ends of this chain. One should not look down upon any of the links. You have not understood the pain that you have given to your relatives or to your masters, when, rejecting mysticism, in which these persons from whom you have your origin had their position, you install yourself in poetry or in philosophy, being led to believe that you were to serve the 'spirit' at all times, and meaning by this that you served or conserved the essence of this abandoned mysticism. But presently you see your son or your disciple rejecting poetry or philosophy in the name of science, and another establishing himself in the domain of pure technique, from the heights of which he would look with mistrust on all the rest. You will see ridiculed all that you consider as important, of which they would not even suspect any more the meaning. You will see that they also believe that they are conserving the substance of that which was yours; they do not feel

the difference, which on your part you so strongly feel, which is proof that their vision has been impoverished. Then you would understand that you have played the same role with regard to those who preceded you. You will come to know that the slope descends altogether when one has commenced to descend ; it is not a line of progress ; it is merely the slope that is natural and one of least effort.

## VII

Taking hold of both the ends of the chain, it is not quite that ; for they are not equivalents. But one should see that the top end is well fixed, and fixed on top. If you want to mount a rope ladder, you have to see that it is firmly fixed to the top of the beam. You might say that it does not interest you to mount to the very top but only to some particular wrung in the ladder. Be it so, but you do not suspend the ladder in emptiness at one or other level which might please you. We have to suspend it from the top end, even when you want only to mount up as far as the middle. Suspended, it will support, under your effort, all that it should. If not it will bend completely, and very soon to the very bottom.

## VIII

You are taken for a reactionary as soon as you begin to denounce the excess and the harm done by technique. You might object that technique is not the enemy of the soul. Certainly not ; not any more than the pole is the enemy of the equator. But one cannot be everywhere at the same time, and if one is seated at the pole, it is not warm there ; and if one should wish to come back to the equator, one has to traverse the intermediate climates, through all the

'zones' so well marked on our children's atlases. I am led to recount the story of a certain boy who had constructed, all by himself, with a rare sense of the practical, a radio receiver, combined in addition with the phonograph ; when his apparatus was ready he did not get any other idea than to make it reproduce anything but jazz. This boy is the image in miniature of the grandeur and misery of the modern occident, which is established itself in the technique, cutting there so well the figure of the "world without soul."

## IX

Government of competent people, or in other words that of technologists—this is what seems to be logic itself, which is logic itself, and which one hardly knows how to avoid. A necessary reaction, indeed, against the "reign of advocates." But let us not omit to maintain intelligence above technique, or what we might call the 'doctrine' or let us say shortly, the spirit, above technique ; for it is very easy transition from the creed of 'technicism' to a mistrust of the spirit. By this one understands how "technocracy," which is so reasonable in principle, should have so soon disappeared, linked with dictatorship. In the same manner and for the same reason, 'corporatism,' which is a corollary of technocracy (parliament of professionals or of those who know to do) and which is well and good in its own way, is already beginning to be less good from the moment when *doing* is only the thing esteemed and recognised, and just *being* has no more any sense. For in order to be free, one has in the first place to be a 'person' before having such or such other sense of the practical. The

fashion that prevails among the liberal professions in Germany of popping up one's name with all possible professional titles as if the person identified himself indissolubly with them, reveals to me more servility than vanity. I find in it another form of military rule. Let us take care of this danger, and then we will be able to see in its true colours a similar vice in politics as a whole, which defining man only with reference to his profession, by his sense of the practical, by his function, and not with reference to his quality as human person, reduces him to the state of a cog-wheel and demands on his part a docility and a ductility which would stand strain.

### X

This inclined plane that descends from mysticism to technique is really that of the modern mind which madly finds place in the domain of technique. Levy-Bruhl thought in modern style, when he was tempted once to define "mysticism" as that primitive mentality, before which he stopped, in a more happy fashion at the term "pre-logical." This state, which is the state of magic among the primitive peoples, is mystic only from the standpoint which we have taken, viz., that it is decanted technique, for it represents a mysticism charged with technique. But seen from the other end, that is from the standpoint of mysticism purged of all that is non-utilitarian, this very same state could also justly be defined as technique, for it represents a mysticism burdened with practical prescriptions and with "*savoir-faire*."

### XI

The singular confusion that has arisen in connection with the term

"a mystic" during recent years is a linguistic phenomenon worthy of note, and which contains, without any doubt, a psychological phenomenon.

Certainly it is the object of words to find use and to undergo depreciation; but in this case the confusion has been too cruel and quick. Not only do they talk of nationalist mystics or revolutionary mystics, which perhaps one can understand; but we also see appearing, if we are to believe our journalists, mystics of sport, of cinema, of youth, of muscle, of jazz . . . and I know not what else. If people do not enter into a dissertation on a mystic of petrol, of rubber or of large departmental stores of cheap articles, they just escape the error. There are finally, of course, those who end by buckling themselves and putting everything upside down.

These exaltations to which they apply the term mystic do not merit it in the least, and on the other hand one would ordinarily expect that this kind of degradation of the word should have some object. And this object, is it not to be found in a certain nostalgia of a veritable mystic, in a certain disinterested desire which is abroad? By this confusion of the word, our world eloquently expresses how much the thing is missed by it.

### XII

Of the five zones which we have distinguished, thought will be the middle zone which is temperate; perhaps this will suffice to define it. "Philosophy," said a mathematician to me, "is to take account of everything." In this it is that it is unreplaceable by any other. Those who, to-day, judge philosophy as being outdated by science, they themselves, or their sons or disciples will consider

theoretical science outdated by technique. But it will be clear that this would be amputating technique itself. That this would be so, our modern people still do understand. By a similar analogy, if they should reflect, they could understand also that to reject philosophy would be in an equal degree an amputation of science; they could imagine also that to reject poetry would be to mutilate philosophy; and they can at least finally suspect that to give up mysticism


would be to expose poetry itself to danger and with it all the rest. But from the proper standpoint of philosophy this would appear more clearly. Philosophy means that we give to each of the other terms their right value, *suum cuique reddere*. It is to dominate the whole structure of the landscape; it is to take hold of the whole of the folding screen and to see all the cards; it is to reconstruct once again the unity of the spirit, at each stage of its ever widening unfoldment.

## SOME PRINCIPLES OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

*By Swami Yatiswarananda*

[Swami Yatiswarananda, formerly the head of the Ramakrishna Math, Madras, is at present in Switzerland preaching Vedanta in different countries of Europe. The following paragraphs are sections from the Introduction to his forthcoming book entitled "The Divine Life," which consists of selections from Hindu Scriptures setting forth both the theory and practice of spiritual life.]

### THE LAW OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

FTEN the question arises as to what should be the initial ideal of God and spiritual life which a devotee should entertain at the commencement of spiritual life. The answer is—let him start from where he stands; let him worship, pray and meditate according to his own conceptions and not according to those of someone else. The child should begin his spiritual life with his child-like ideas, and the grown-up person with his advanced ones. Great harm is done to spiritual growth by trying to standardise and drill the thoughts of people. Each aspirant must be free to follow the law of his own being. The child need not be ashamed because he is not a youth, the youth should not feel sorry that he is not an elderly man. If the child tries to think like a grown-up man and the

latter like the former, the result would be confusion and not spiritual progress. So each should strive to evolve more and more in his own way, and thereby outgrow his previous state and take up higher and higher ones as a matter of course.

Swami Vivekananda puts this in a humorous way thus: "It is good to be born in a Church but not to die there." Institutional religions may try their best to keep their followers in a state of perpetual childhood, but a true aspirant, making the best use of the protection and support given to him during the early years of his life, should outgrow them and stand on his own strength, drawing his inspiration more from the Divine than from men and institutions. This is the secret of growth in the world of true religion. Whoever follows this law evolves, and whoever breaks it



remains stunted in his growth, and may even further run the risk of going down in the scale of spiritual evolution and progress.

#### THE YOGAS IN BRIEF

The Bhagavad Gita places different Yogas or methods of spiritual culture before the aspirants of different temperaments and tendencies. As has been mentioned before, these paths may be roughly classed as those of selfless activity, devotion, knowledge and meditation. They may be discussed here in brief.

The tendency to perform action is innate in all beings, and none can remain inactive. In the case of persons who are particularly of an active temperament, what is required is not cessation from action but the proper controlling and directing of their activities. Work with attachment binds the soul. But selfless work performed in a spirit of worship becomes a means of attaining to freedom. Says Sri Krishna in Bhagavad-Gita : "To one who does actions, forsaking attachment and resigning them to the Divine, evil does not cling just as water does not cling to a lotus leaf." (V, 10) "Even though engaged in actions, he, having taken refuge in me, the Lord, attains to the eternal and immutable state by My Grace." (XVIII, 56)

The devotee hankers whole-heartedly for union with his Beloved Lord. Worldly love is not able to satisfy the deep yearnings of his soul. His entire mind flows as it were in a continuous stream towards his Lord who is of the nature of "love unspeakable." His God is not a Being dwelling somewhere in a far-off heaven, but is seated in his own heart. In order to see Him and to feel His Divine

Presence he has only to look within. "The Lord," says Sri Krishna, "dwells in the hearts of all beings. .... Take refuge in Him with all thy heart ; by His grace shalt thou attain supreme peace and the Eternal Abode." (XVIII, 61, 62).

The Jnani or the seeker with a philosophic turn of mind is not satisfied with the little pleasures of this life. He is anxious to know his true nature and the reality at the back of the phenomenal world. He does not possess any great attraction for the personal aspects of the Deity. He yearns to attain to the Infinite—his true Self. Speaking of those who follow the path of knowledge, observes Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita : "Those who have their intellect absorbed in That, whose Self is That, whose steadfastness is in That, they attain to the highest salvation, their impurities being cleansed by knowledge. Relative existence has been conquered by them, even here in this world, whose mind rests in evenness. Since the Infinite Self is even and without imperfection, therefore they indeed rest in Him." (V. 17, 19).

The man of contemplative bent of mind, endowed with a tremendous will-power, wants to control his whole nature, external and internal. But spasmodic attempts at concentration will lead only to failure and mental depression. The restless mind is to be brought under control slowly and steadily "through practice and renunciation." Speaking of the Yoga of contemplation, Sri Krishna says, "With the understanding steadfast, with the mind fixed on the Self, let the Yogi attain quietude by degrees. By whatever cause the restless, unsteady mind wanders away, let him, curbing it from the wandering, bring it back

under the control of the Self alone. . . Verily the Supreme Bliss comes to the Yogi who has become perfectly tranquil in mind, whose passions are quieted, who is free from impurities and who has become one with the All-pervading Being." (Bhagavad Gita VI, 25-27.)

### HARMONY OF THE YOGAS

All the various spiritual paths can more or less be classed under the four types of Yoga mentioned above. When we study religious psychology in general and the Bhagavad Gita in particular, we find that these paths are not, however, like water-tight compartments. They are all so inter-dependent that many of the texts speaking of one are applicable to others as well. It is, therefore, impossible, as we have seen, to have a clear-cut division between one path and another. The aspirants following one path no doubt possess some predominating features that are distinctive of that path, but they have also many traits that they share in common with the followers of other paths.

The person who follows the path of selfless activity has to possess devotion, discrimination and concentration along with non-attachment. Aspirants of the other paths too, besides being more or less endowed with common ethical qualifications, should have, it may be in varying degrees, all these indispensable elements of spiritual life. Thus it is practically impossible to draw dividing lines between different types of aspirants and the paths they pursue. For example, evenness of mind which Sri Krishna describes as Yoga in the Bhagavad Gita is a virtue which has to be passed by all Yogis alike. We may fur-

ther quote the following verses of the Gita to illustrate the common features of the Yogas :

"Content with what comes to him without effort, unaffected by the pairs of opposites, free from envy and even-minded in success and failure, the wise man is not bound even though he be acting." (IV:22). "Resigning mentally all deeds to Me, the Divine Being, having Me as the Highest Goal, and resorting to the devotion of right knowledge, do thou ever fix thy mind on Me." (XVIII : 57). "The Yogi who, being established in unity, worships Me dwelling in all beings—he abides in Me, whatever his mode of life may be." (VI:31).

All these words of Sri Krishna are more or less applicable to every type of Yogis. There is a conscious or unconscious combination of all noble attributes in the lives of not only the perfect ones, but also in the real aspirants in general.

### THE IDEAL OF SYNTHETIC YOGA

The reason of this combination is not far to seek. Human mind is a synthetic whole possessing the faculties of will, feeling and knowledge. The path of selfless activity and that of concentration and meditation both depend more on the faculty of will than on the other inseparable faculties, although the former path is mainly objective while the latter is mainly subjective. In the path of devotion feeling is the dominant factor, whereas in the path of knowledge, with its discipline of analysis and discrimination, the aspirant relies mainly on intellect or reason. But all the faculties are inseparable, and so are the Yogas ; they all fulfil one another.

Such being the case, is it not desirable to put equal stress on all the four paths of Yoga, and attempt at a simultaneous development of all the mental faculties alike ? Indeed, if this can be done, it would mean an all-round spiritual growth. In the sphere of religion one-sided developments have their dangers. Work sometimes becomes aimless and leads to the restlessness of the soul. Yoga or the path of concentration at times degenerate into physical mortification and pursuit of psychic powers. Devotion often deteriorates into meaningless sentimentalism. And knowledge may also lapse into dry intellectualism and morbid inactivity. Hence there is a great necessity for combining the different paths in order to safeguard against the dangers of following one path to the exclusion of others. Let work be combined with meditation, and knowledge tempered with devotion and vice versa. Let us try to be equally established in all the Yogas and bring about a harmonious development of all our latent spiritual powers. This all-sided development of personality is the healthiest ideal for any religion or spiritual aspirant to pursue. Speaking of this synthe-

tic Yoga, says Swami Vivekananda, "Would to God that all men were so constituted that in their minds all these elements of philosophy, mysticism, emotion and work were equally present in full ! That is the ideal, my ideal of a perfect man. Every one who has only one or two of these elements of character, I consider 'one-sided,' and this world is full of such 'one-sided' men, with knowledge of that one road only along which they move ; and anything else is dangerous and horrible to them. To become harmoniously balanced in all these four directions is my ideal of religion."

Thus an embodiment of this synthetic Yoga is the man who is fully illumined with the light of the highest knowledge, who is ever active in helping others without any thought of his own self, who intoxicated with Divine Love, thinks lightly even of salvation, who is perfectly established in the glory of Self, realised through the complete control of the senses and the mind, who has attained to the fullest growth of all his best faculties, and is therefore, 'a free man of the whole estate.'

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# SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND THE RELIGION OF REALISATION

By Dr. S. K. Maitra, M.A., Ph.D.

[The following is the address delivered by Prof. S. K. Maitra of the Benares Hindu University in connection with Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Celebrations in Benares. The place of Sri Ramakrishna in Indian Renaissance and the core of the Master's message are expounded by the Professor with learning and simplicity.]

IT IS only India that can produce a Ramakrishna, just as it is only Europe that can produce a Karl Marx. India has always stood for spiritual realisation, as Europe has stood for dogmas. We readily admit other points of view than our own and never believe ourselves to be infallible. Our thinkers have always held that the different creeds and sects represent different paths to the same destination. As Sir S. Radhakrishnan has said, "When the Hindu found that different people aimed at and achieved God-realisation in different ways he generously recognised them all and justified their place in the course of history."

And perhaps no Hindu saint was more true to this gospel of realisation than Ramakrishna. "It is immaterial," he said, "whether or not one believes in the incarnation of Radha and Krishna. One may believe (like the Hindu or the Christian) in God's incarnation; one may not. But let all have a yearning for this intensity of love for the Lord. That is the one thing needful. If you must be mad, be not so for the things of the world. But be mad with the love of the Lord." (*Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 242.)

Ramakrishna did not care for creeds or dogmas. It was a very characteristic saying of his that in God's universe there is room for all

creeds and sects. He used to give, as an illustration of the unimportance of creed for the religious life, the fact that Ramanuja who was a Visist-adwaitavadin had for his teacher an Advaita philosopher. In religion the creed does not matter. What matters is the inner realisation.

We see very clearly the difference between religion as realisation and religion as dogma if we compare Christianity, as embodied in the life of Jesus Christ, with Christianity as interpreted by the Church in the Middle Ages. Christianity in the life of Jesus Christ is a way of living, a path to a realization. In the hands of the Church Fathers all its vitality is gone, all its contact with life is lost, and it becomes hardened into a dogma. When religion loses itself in dogmas, there begins an era of religious persecution. To what lengths the spirit of persecution for the sake of the dogma can go is illustrated by the burning of philosophers like Bruno at the stake.

Fortunately, Hinduism never made any persecution for the sake of any dogma. That was because of its catholicity which tolerated the most diverse opinions. This catholicity of Hinduism Ramakrishna wanted to preserve as far as possible. For him there were no barriers of race, creed, caste or sect. It was this liberality which appealed to the educated mind

and was the secret of the influence which he exercised over the cultured section of his community. It was this which also attracted to him the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj, like Keshav Chandra Sen and Pratap Chandra Mazumdar.

This was also the reason why Ramakrishna became the centre of the Hindu revivalist movement of the last century. By revivalist movement I do not mean a return to orthodoxy, for neither in Ramakrishna's life nor in his teaching was there any orthodoxy, but a recognition of the fact that it was not necessary to leave the Hindu fold in order to realise liberal ideas in religion. The advent of Ramakrishna thus put a stop to the secessionist movements either towards Christianity or towards Brahmoism which were such a characteristic feature of the religious life of our country in the nineteenth century. Educated and cultured Hindus, who had received a new light from their contact with the West, flocked to Ramakrishna when they discovered that here was a man who, without leaving the Hindu fold, realised in his life the highest truths of religion. In this way Ramakrishna did a service to Hinduism very similar to that which was rendered by Ram Mohan Ray at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century and by Dayanand Saraswati towards the close of the nineteenth century. Ram Mohan Ray showed by reviving the religion of the Upanishads that the highest principles of monotheism could be realised within the Hindu fold. So, too, did Dayanand by reviving the Vedic religion. Similarly, Ramakrishna showed by his gospel of realisation that Hinduism was fully competent to satisfy the highest aspirations of the soul.

What, in fact, all these three great seers did was to rediscover the Hindu ideals which had suffered an eclipse during centuries of foreign domination. This rediscovery was similar to that which ushered in that great age of European culture known as the Renaissance. Ram Mohan, Ramakrishna and Dayanand, therefore, brought about a Renaissance of Hinduism in the nineteenth century.

I believe there have been three important revivals of Hinduism. The first Renaissance occurred in that golden age of Hindu culture known as the Gupta period, which was brought about by the contact of Hindu ideas with those of Buddhism. The second great Renaissance took place in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, due to the impact of Islam, when India produced such great religious geniuses as Ramanand, Kabir, Chaitanya and Nanak. The third Renaissance took place in the nineteenth century, and this was the direct result of the contact with Western civilization. The three great leaders of this third Renaissance were Ram Mohan, Dayanand and Ramakrishna.

Although all these three led the Hindu Renaissance movement of the nineteenth century, yet there was a very vital difference between the method of Ramakrishna on the one hand, and that of Ram Mohan and Dayanand on the other. The latter relied upon reason and logic, whereas the method of Ramakrishna was one of inner realisation. Here perhaps Ramakrishna was more true to the Hindu tradition than the other two great seers. Ram Mohan proved Hinduism to be the true logical synthesis of all the religions, whereas

Ramakrishna realised the synthesis in life.

Indeed, neither in the East nor in the West has there been any saint who is so mad after God-realisation as the seer of Dakshineswar. His whole life in fact is one continuous series of realisations of the most diverse kind. When he was a little boy, one day while crossing a field with a basket of puffed rice, he saw a dark cloud advancing rapidly and a flight of snow-white cranes lining the edge of it. The scene was so indescribably beautiful that the boy immediately passed into a trance. He fell on the ground and the puffed rice was scattered. These ecstasies became more frequent as he grew up. When he was a priest in the Dakshineswar Kali temple, he used to be seized from time to time with a burning desire to possess the Goddess, and one day, not being able to satisfy this desire, he was on the point of committing suicide by plunging the dagger of the Goddess into his heart, when lo ! the Deity revealed Herself in his consciousness.

His thirst for realisation was so great that he tried one by one all the traditional ways of realising God known to Hinduism—the *Bhakti* way, the *Tantrika* way, the *Vedanta* way, etc. To complete the practice of all religions known to him, he tried the Islamic as well as the Christian realisation. To realise God in the Islamic way, he followed to the letter the injunctions of a convert to Islam, named Govind Rai, and was on the point of taking beef even, when at the earnest request of Mathur Babu, the son-in-law of the proprietress of the temple, he desisted. So again, in the house of Shambhu Charan Mullick, a devotee of his, he listened to the Bible which was read out to him. He at

once fell into a trance, and for several days he was filled with Christian thought and Christian love, until he saw the vision of Christ.

For Ramakrishna the one thing needful was realisation. Work he only regarded as a means (and that too, if it was unattached) and never as an end. "Do not regard work," he said, "as the be-all and end-all of human existence. Pray for Bhakti... Suppose you are fortunate enough to see God. Then what would you pray for? Would you pray for dispensaries and hospitals, tanks and wells, roads and serais? No, no, these are realities to us so long as we do not see God. But once face to face with the vision Divine, we see them as they are—transitory things no better than dreams" (*Gospel of Ramakrishna*, p. 25).

Ramakrishna thus cared only for realisation. But his great disciple, Swami Vivekananda, added to this single principle of realisation another, namely, service. Service, however, is not strictly speaking, a separate principle, for it is nothing but another form of realisation. In service every human being is regarded as an incarnation of God (Naranarayana). Service, therefore, means realisation of the Divinity of man. We may, therefore, say that the two principles followed by the band of devoted workers who have been trained under the inspiration of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda are inner realisation and realisation through service.

The ideal of service brings the Ramakrishna Mission into line with other humanitarian workers. No society, perhaps, has followed more loyally the gospel of service than this Mission. No band of workers has shown a more practical realisation of

the Divinity of man. To look upon every human being as a manifestation of God and to serve him and worship him as such—what ideal of life can be nobler than this ?

Indeed, when I look at this noble band of workers, I feel that there is something undying about the Hindu religion. It has suffered innumerable onslaughts, it has passed through innumerable crises, it has experienced innumerable catastrophies, but there it stands, ancient and eternal, an undying witness of the power of the human soul. A religion that can produce such a noble band of workers can

never die. What we require is the spirit of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, the unconquerable spirit that would never bend before any obstacle. Our greatest enemy is ourselves. It is our want of confidence in ourselves, it is our weak and halting and vacillating spirit that stands in the way of our progress.

If we can conquer our weakness, if we can cast away our inferiority complex and face the obstacles that confront us in a spirit of boldness touched with humility, our future is assured.

## INDIA AS THE CULTURAL GURU OF THE PAST

*By Dr. Dharendra Nath Roy, Ph.D.*

[Dr. Roy is the Professor of Philosophy in the University of Philippines. While Dr. Roy's glowing account of India's material and cultural achievements in the past rightly emphasises that the refinement of the mind and not mere adventurous spirit is the sign of true culture, it also seems to our mind as implying that danger certainly threatens a people if they fail to develop the capacity for self-defence while they pursue the higher refinements of the soul.]

**I**T IS not conservatism, with its unbecoming connotation, to study a people's past and receive inspiration therefrom. For, the present is simply a link in the chain of a people's history which depicts the expression of its soul pushing on its course for ever to realise itself. The people, who talk of the present and the future without regard to the past, are those who have usurped their present position with false credentials and are anxious to abuse biological induction by attempting to break away from their low pedigree. There is so little inspiration in tracing descent from the Goths and the Vandals, the Vikings and the buccaneers that it is clever to assume the new epithet

of "progress" without talking of anything from which "progress" is achieved as a historical sequence, and then most unceremoniously, if not impudently, make a self-appraisal of superiority. The whole thing is a rollicking mess deceptive in all its dazzling appearance. A subject people, however, can hardly allow itself to be swayed by that delusive formula of "progress" and run its present course of life separated from its real past. It is like a plant cut off from its roots but given plenty of showers by the gardener ; its greenness may retain itself from artificial moisture, but when the source of life is gone it is only a matter of time to see it totally rotten.

Can the people of India build up a healthy present or dream of a golden future without due regard to their past? What inspiration can a subject people have to build its destiny anew when its existing political status is an implicit surrender of national self-confidence and a homage to an alien race? It is the moral imperative of a subject people to keep its brighter past always connected with its gloomy present, (for the present of a subject people is always gloomier than when it was not a subject people) so that the sun of its national being can keep the present vitalised from within and slowly dissolve away the gathering clouds from its own horizon to anticipate a real summer of joy and productivity. There is no greater religion to a subject people than to save its own ideal, its national soul; for, otherwise it lapses into a degrading idolatry by consciously or unconsciously worshipping the alien rulers.

India's past was so full of glory and greatness that it once made her appear like the paradise on earth, a dream-land of the whole mankind. Her splendour, whether material or moral or spiritual, was simply staggering to human imagination. Her material products were so fine and unrivalled that all ancient nations eagerly sought to have trade relations with her. It is said that even ancient Egypt and Chaldea "were commercially its vassals and dependents." The people of these countries saw the Indians well versed in practical science and art and highly skilled in manufacturing work. "India offered for sale articles not elsewhere to be found: the shining warts of the oyster; glass-like stones dug up out of the bowels of the earth, or

gathered in the beds of dried-up brooks; linen which was plucked as a blossom from a tree, and manufactured into cloth as white as snow; transparent fabrics, webs of woven wind which, when laid on the dewy grass, melted from the eyes; above all, those glistening glossy threads stolen from the body of the caterpillar, beautiful as the wings of the moth into which that caterpillar is afterwards transformed." (Winwood Reade, *The Martyrdom of Man*, Pp. 43 & 44).

The expert navigators of Guzerat took these things to Chaldea and Egypt where they found good markets for all of them. At a much later period the Phœnicians carried many varieties of Indian goods to the people of Europe, whose ambition grew up as they saw such wonderful things, and heard even more wonderful stories about India. The Persians and the Arabs followed the Phœnicians to make themselves rich by selling Indian goods to the Europeans. Large and prosperous cities arose on the routes through which such goods were carried and perished when the routes were changed. India's trade spread in the same prosperous manner throughout the eastern countries including the various large islands that stand as the fringe of Asia. The rich commercial commodities of India thus reached all countries to her right and left, far and near, making the people everywhere wonder about the prosperity of this land.

Later yet, the merchants of Venice and Genoa became fabulously rich by monopolising the Indian trade in Europe. When this became known to other people of Southern Europe, they too were fired with great ambition to establish their own trade rela-



tion with India. Columbus was sent out to discover a sea route. He sailed westward and reached the coast of a new land which, however, he thought was India and the people of which he and his fellowmen called the Indians. The Portuguese people sent Vasco da Gama who succeeded in discovering a sea route to India by way of the South African coast and returned triumphantly after thirty-two months with a letter from a Hindu king, a letter which was written on a golden leaf welcoming the stranger. It was a great occasion for the Portuguese people. "That night all the houses of Lisbon were illuminated; the gutters ran with wine; the skies, for miles around, were reddened with the light of bonfires." (*Ibid*, p. 300). There were certainly good reasons for such jubilation. It was they who finally succeeded, before any other people of Europe, in discovering such a wonderful land and in acquiring the good will of a king of that land. And what did they not see there to explain the reason as to why that land was so prosperous! They saw no less than what an American scholar recently described as things which the British people saw when they first arrived in India. "Nearly every kind of manufacture," says he, "or product known to the civilized world—nearly every kind of creation of man's brain and hand, existing anywhere, and prized either for its utility or beauty—had long, long been produced in India. India was a far greater industrial and manufacturing nation than any in Europe or than any other in Asia. Her textile goods—the fine products of her looms, in cotton, wool, linen and silk—were famous over the civilised world; so were her exquisite jewellery and her precious stones

cut in every lovely form; so were her pottery, porcelains, ceramics of every kind, quality, colour and beautiful shape; so were her fine works in metal—iron, steel, silver and gold. She had great architecture—equal in beauty to any in the world. She had great engineering works. She had great merchants, great businessmen, great bankers and financiers. Not only was she the greatest ship-building nation, but she had great commerce and trade by land and sea which extended to all known civilised countries."

The Portuguese discovery of a new sea route brought them the golden opportunity to open direct trade relations with India. It thus occasioned the ruin of Venice, the fall of many great cities on the Tigris, the Euphrates and the Nile, and at the same time the rapid and pompous rise of Lisbon as the great European market-place of finished Indian goods. The increasing importance of the Portuguese people in wealth and power through their trade relation with India was a great temptation for the other European peoples.

The Spaniards, of course, went to their newly-discovered America, but amidst all their adventurous undertakings there, they could not forget India. A big party of explorers headed by Ferdinand Magellan left the American shores to discover a Pacific route to India. They arrived at a group of islands which they later called the Philippines but which they thought was a part of India and the natives of which were *Indios* or Indians. It seems the very name of India was such an obsession with them that wherever they arrived in course of their search for that blessed land they liked it to be no other coun-

try than India and comforted themselves by calling its inhabitants as Indians. Other European peoples like the Dutch, the English, and the French tried to follow the examples of the Portuguese and the Spaniards. They all undertook perilous voyages over the mighty seas with the hope that some day they too would be able to reach India and make themselves rich by acquiring her prosperous trade. They arrived one after another and were received with generous hospitality. As they saw golden opportunities lying before them they all got busy, each people using every method it could think of to get the lion's share. Naturally there ensued, among these peoples, hard rivalry and clash of interests. In that clash finally flashed the good fortune of the Englishmen who rose above all others and took, with a stately mien, the lion's share of India's trade. That lion's share has served England splendidly to let it rise from its extreme insignificance in every respect to a state of unrivalled power and prosperity. India has made what England is to-day and it is nothing but false pride that stands in the way of recognising this truth.

There was, however, one peculiar fact in all the eagerness of the western peoples to reach and contact India. They wanted a share of her vast material wealth and when they saw plenty of easy opportunities for them they developed an intense greed for more and more of that wealth—a greed which blinded them so much that they could not see India's immeasurable cultural wealth beside and profit themselves by having a share of it. Had they done it while they sought her trade they would have enriched themselves in a far better way

to the glory of both India and their own countries. Her culture would have enabled them to understand that although she had abundance of material wealth, she considered her spiritual wealth yet more worthwhile than all of it, and that the proper meaning of the former in a civilised state of life could not be understood unless it was considered in connection with the latter. Her material wealth would have gone to them as a fine wholesome gift and not as a ruthless extortion. She would not have been reduced to an awfully miserable state by her ingrate beneficiaries.

It cannot be said that India ever tried to withhold her cultural wealth from any people. For, it was she who realised, before all others, that a true culture would enrich itself more and more when shared by more and more people and that the giver of it would lose nothing by giving but might gain as much as, if not more than, the receiver. She never denied her culture to anyone who really wanted it. Ancient Persia, Greece, and Rome received abundantly from her culture and civilisation. The people of these countries sought direct cultural contact with her. Greece, though situated at a distance farthest of all, was no less eager to send her scholars there. Voltaire, that great leader of the Enlightenment said, "The Greeks before the time of Pythagoras travelled into India for instruction." And we know now that even Pythagoras and many post-Pythagorean scholars of Greece including Plato came to India to receive instruction in Indian philosophy. Many renowned scholars of Europe admit that India exerted great influence upon the entire Greecian world of thought. We can see why it is said

that Indian thought highly influenced the Neo-Platonists and the Gnostics. We can see why there are also well-known scholars like Leon de Rosney, Ludwig Buchner, Emile Burnouf and Arthur Lillie who sincerely believe that early Christianity owed its origin to India. Had it not been overtaken and absorbed by the people of the Crusaders' type, it would not have assumed its present aggressive form so repugnant to Indian spirit of culture. The science and industries of India were no less in demand than her literature and philosophy. The Persians and later the Arabs studied her various sciences, especially mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, and medicine, and having learnt these for their own countries they sought also to spread their knowledge to further West. And were there not also India's contributions in the well-developed system of industry and agriculture which the noble Arabs carried with them to civilise the West?

When this West came to know, through these Arabs, of that incomparable India, her immense wealth and prosperity, and all other material splendour of her civilisation, it stopped its usual home occupations, such as fighting, plundering, pirating, etc., and turned its attention to India. Unlike before, it thought of sending to India not scholars like Pythagoras and Plato, not "gentlemen" to study and understand her civilisation, but only "adventurers" to get India's material wealth. We may cite the example of the Portuguese as typical "adventurers" who were sent to India. Could such kind of adventurers be expected to see in India anything more attractive and worthwhile than her material wealth and splendour, and to do anything better there

than repeating their usual selfish practices of the home land? Could they be expected to feel interested in the great cultural achievements of India? That would be expecting something foreign to their taste and probably beyond their capacity. Yet, they were the only people through whom the West began to have contact with India since the historic discovery of Vasco da Gama. Alas, for India, whose cultural spirit had to shrink under the ruthless pressure of these "adventurers," while the West began to know her only as a fair land for its greed and adventure. The cultural meaning of India remained lost to the West until the recent time when the world circumstances have somehow affected its usual cocksureness and opened its hitherto closed mind to things more permanent and worthwhile than mere pelf and power. Such a happy sign of disillusionment naturally makes India attractive again, though this time in another sense. If the West becomes as actively interested in India's cultural wealth, as it has been in her material wealth, it will be a sure relief for suffering India and a sound remedy to poise the West. The West very badly needs a sympathetic study and clear understanding of the cultural spirit of India in order that it can give proper meaning to all the wealth and splendour which it has ruthlessly extorted from her but which it has not been able to use in a manner so as to effect any real good.

This period of Indian history—the period beginning with the coming of the Portuguese—is certainly not an inspiring period of cultural India. She has never been happy by being known only by her material splendour. She, of course, received the

Western "adventurers" with a fine and frank spirit, offering every kind of help and hospitality well becoming her cultured life but she was simply confounded when she saw that the new strangers from the West were very much different from the old ones and were not amenable to any cultural persuasions. Long life of culture made her forget the old tribal ways of life. So she failed to recognise the "adventurers" in their true colour and was at a loss as to how to deal with them. Even if she could recognise them rightly, she could not forthwith stoop down very low from the height of culture to attain which she struggled for many thousand years. So the "adventurers" had their way and she failed to prevent it.

But excepting this period of her unfortunate relationship she can remember herself with deserving pride for the world-wide dissemination of her great culture and civilisation. Her conscience is quite clear when she feels proud of it. Even in her trade relation in the past with other countries she never used any direct or indirect force to secure markets for her goods. And of course, she never sought markets for her civilisation. Others desired it upon their contact with her and they took as much as they pleased.

Attempts have been and are still being made by some bigoted Western writers to adulterate the history of her broad cultural relationship in the past with the great centuries in the West including Greece and Rome in order to make her unfortunate present somehow appear consistent with it. They try to belittle her past glories by a subtle manipulation of facts and to reverse her supreme cultural status in favour

of Greece or some other ancient countries with which they maintain some sentimental ties. Where such reversal of India's cultural relation is clearly impossible they may resort to the convenient thesis that similarities in cultures are often due to the similar evolution of human life and thought in different parts of the world rather than to any causal relation between them. In all such attempts it seems quite plain that they do not feel comfortable if India takes her right position as the cultural *Guru* of the ancient world.

But when India turns to her north beyond the mighty Himalayas and to her north-east, she is happy to see there all countries still remember her past cultural gifts with a sincere feeling of respect and gratitude. One of these countries having got its own great civilisation no less older than that of India, had naturally all the capacity to understand and appreciate the latter. When it found something in India's culture which could be introduced profitably into its own great system, it sent its scholars to invite the scholars of India and acquire from them whatever she needed. The other countries followed the same path. The people of these countries received many things of the Indian culture even through their trade relations, for they had already attained a stage of civilised life to understand and appreciate the higher values of the Indian culture. They took many things from it and if they still try to hold these in their social and cultural life, they do it with the same old feeling of respect and gratitude. India's present misfortune has not caused any fundamental change in their attitude towards her.

The great significant fact of India's relation with these countries of the East is that it has always been a healthy relation in which there is no sense of humiliation, no racial or cultural arrogance. India can be rightly proud of it, having never deviated from her cultural spirit in all such relations. What do we see in her ancient relation with China, Japan, Java, Cambodia, and the Philippines? She did not thrust herself upon any of them, but they imbibed her culture and civilisation of their own accord to improve upon their own. The Indian culture did not have them, but they had it. What a good contrast it makes with the so-called modern civilisation which seeks to impose itself upon others whether they like it or not!

The peculiarity of Indian culture lies in this that it bodes no danger to any. Its own being is an evolutionary process and not an imposition. When the ancient Greeks by virtue of their political power tried to impose their civilisation upon India, there was the inevitable result,—the total expulsion of the Greek civilisation from India. The Scythians, the Huns, the Tartars could not impose but were slowly drawn into the all-absorbing heart of the great Aryan civilisation. The Mohammedans tried to impose, but have they succeeded? For nine centuries they ruled with iron hand over India, destroyed many precious things and converted many natives, but have they been able to destroy the spirit? We are sure they have not. On the other hand, the Mohammedans with their rough habits and violent temper came to India sword in hand, and these centuries of contact with the Hindus have greatly tempered

their nature. They have given up the sword for the pen and the plough.

Take again India's relation with China and Japan. Indian culture spread along with Buddhism not to destroy Taoism or Confucianism in China or Shintoism in Japan but to enrich them, not to create friction but to lend its co-operation wherever it is desired in the interest of higher culture. That is why in China Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism flourish side by side and the same Chinese may at the same time pay equal respect to all. That is why almost all the Japanese are Shintoists and yet they find no difficulty in professing Buddhism. Culture means this, not to impose but to socialise and permeate. It gives whenever it is desired but does not lend. India by giving her culture to others has not robbed them of anything; her relation with them is a fellowship of cultures.

This is why in India even to-day one can find so many aboriginal tribes living their crude primitive life beside the cultured Hindus. India could have easily absorbed or exterminated them long ago. It would have been very easy during the rule of the Hindu emperor like Chandragupta or Asoka. The great forces of her culture could have easily swept away all forms of primitive life; but that would be culture contradicting itself. Indian culture, true to its name, has been existing peacefully amidst all forms of life for more than forty centuries, believing that it is anything but moral to force itself upon those who choose to love their own and as such remain different. Truth shines in its own glory. If there is any greater value in Indian culture, all will be attracted to it and spontaneously acquire it for themselves. There is no humiliation

in such process and, therefore, no immorality.

India's cultural relation with all the eastern countries was based upon this moral principle. Even with the smaller islands in her east she sought simply her trade relations. The Indian traders sailed away with their goods and when they arrived in these lands they found themselves and their goods well received. Some of these merchants chose to settle among the natives, and along with the various sorts of their merchandise came invariably their culture and civilisation. No feeling of superiority, no desire to impose, no sense of humiliation stained the good relationship between the natives and the new settlers. The Indians lived on the coast lines, followed their own ways of life but with no aggressive or unsocial attitude towards the natives. Indian culture came to such lands as a natural flow brought on through commercial intercourse between them. It was the case of a slow cultural infiltration as inevitable from the contact with a people firmly rooted on a

long established civilisation. It had to be slow, because the people of these lands took time to understand the things and ideas of the Indian civilisation and choose from them whatever was deemed as acceptable. The process was highly moral, for it established no anomalous relation between the natives of the land and the colonists. This is evident from the fact that the Indian settlers have been absorbed by the native population while their culture shone over them all. Had not India fallen a victim to the greed and unrefinement of men her culture would have attained a climax of which man has not yet been able to dream; and all the surrounding countries that were drawn to her in a bond of genuine fellowship would have shown that the relationship among races and countries might bear a lofty meaning equally agreeable to all. Let India with her wealth of true culture be happy always to give but never to rob, always to stand by and co-operate but never to oppress,—true culture means that and nothing else.

## SWETASWATARA UPANISHAD

*By Swami Thyagisananda.*

त्रिरुन्नतं स्थाप्य समं शरीरं हृदीन्द्रियाणि मनसा संनिवेश्य ।

ब्रह्मोडुपेन प्रतरेत् विद्वान् सोतांसि सर्वाणि भयानकानि ॥

शरीरं=the body त्रिरुन्नतं=with the chest, throat and head held erect समं=in a straight posture स्थाप्य=placing इन्द्रियाणि=the senses मनसा=together with the mind हृदि=in the heart संनिवेश्य=making it enter विद्वान्=the knowing one सर्वाणि=all भयानकानि=fearful सोतांसि=currents ब्रह्मोडुपेन=by means of the raft of Brahman प्रतरेत्=should cross over.

Placing the body in a straight posture,<sup>1</sup> with the chest, throat and head held erect, making the senses and the mind enter

the heart,<sup>2</sup> the knowing one<sup>3</sup> should cross over all the fearful currents<sup>4</sup> by means of the raft of Brahman<sup>5</sup>. (8)

*Note.*—1. *In a straight posture, etc.*—During the practice of Yoga a good deal of changes goes on in the body and the main part of these changes lies along the spinal column. Hence it is insisted that one should hold the spinal column erect in a straight line. To meditate standing or walking also distracts attention, and to do it lying down flat is risky inasmuch as one may lapse into sleep. The straight seated posture is therefore the best for holding attention and keeping alert and awake.

2. *Making the senses and the mind enter the heart*—Refers to the practice of Pratyahara. It means the checking of the outgoing tendencies of the mind and senses and turning the mind back upon itself.

3. *The knowing one*—He who knows the meaning and practice of Pranava.

4. *The fearful currents*—Tendencies of the mind caused by ignorance, which drag one to the ocean of births and deaths (Samsara).

5. *Raft of Brahman*—The Taraka Brahman or Pranava (Om). This refers to the practice of silent repetition (Japam) in combination with meditation on its meaning.

प्राणान्प्रपीडयेद् संयुक्तचेष्टः क्षीणे प्राणे नासिकयोच्छ्वसीत ।

दुष्टाश्वयुक्तमिव बाहमेनं विद्वान् मनो धारयेताप्रमत्तः ॥

संयुक्तचेष्टः = regulating the activities इह = in this body प्राणान् = the senses प्रपीड्य = controlling with an effort क्षीणे प्राणे = when the vital activities become tranquil नासिकया = through the nostrils उच्छ्वसीत = should breathe out अप्रमत्तः = without being distracted विद्वान् = the knowing one दुष्टाश्वयुक्त = attached to restive horses बाहं = the reins इव = like मनः = the mind धारयेत् = should control.

Controlling the desires with an effort,<sup>1</sup> and regulating the activities<sup>2</sup> in the body one should breathe out<sup>3</sup> through the nostrils when they become gentle. Then the knowing one,<sup>4</sup> without being in the least distracted, should keep his hold on the mind as on the reins attached to restive horses. (9)

*Note.*—1. *Controlling the desires with an effort*—Refers to the practice of Yama or moral virtues consisting of non-injury, non-stealing, continence, truthfulness, non-acceptance of gifts, etc. The practice of these guards the aspirant from the influence of evil tendencies acquired in the past.

2. *Regulating, etc.*—This refers to Niyama or practices meant to direct the tendencies and activities of the mind towards worthy objects. This practice is more positive than negative. It consists of such observances as purity, contentment, austerity, scriptural study, devotion to God, etc.

3. *Breathe out, etc.*—Refers to the practice of Pranayama as elaborated in the Yogic Scriptures. It does not consist of merely breathing out (Rechaka) but also of breathing in (Pooraka) and holding the breath for some time, both inside and outside (Kumbhaka). This should be attempted only after

fair progress is made in the preliminaries of Yama and Niyama and a fair control of psycho-physical activities is already attained ; otherwise this is dangerous. Moreover it should be practised only under the guidance of a competent Guru.

4. *The Knowing one*—One who is well-versed in the theory of Yoga.

समे शुचौ शर्करवह्निवालुकाविवर्जिते शब्दजलाश्रयादिभिः ।

मनोनुकूले न तु चक्षुपीडने गुहानिवाताश्रयणे प्रयोजयेत् ॥

समे = where the floor is even शुचौ = pure शर्करवह्निवालुकाविवर्जिते = free from pebbles, fire and dust शब्दजलाश्रयादिभिः (विवर्जिते) = free from disturbing noises and dampness मनोनुकूले = helpful for concentration of mind न तु चक्षुपीडने = pleasing to the eye गुहानिवाताश्रयणे = resorting to caves and other places free from wind प्रयोजयेत् = one should perform one's exercises in mind control.

One should perform one's exercises in mind control, in a pure level place, free from pebbles, dust and fire as well as from disturbing noises and dampness, which is helpful for concentration of mind and pleasing to the eyes—in caves and such other place free from wind. (10)

*Note.*—The passage describes the various conditions that are to be observed, if Yoga is to be practised successfully and safely. A pure place is one which fulfils the hygienic conditions and has also holy associations. It is difficult to sit in a place for long and in comfort, if it is not level and is full of pebbles. Dust, dampness and smoke, which invariably accompany fire, make the air impure and thus make Pranayama dangerous. A pleasing scenery helps one to compose the mind while noise and strong wind disturb the mind practising concentration.

नीहरधूमाकानिलानलानां खद्योतविद्युत्स्फटिकशशीनाम् ।

एतानि रूपाणि पुरःसराणि ब्रह्मण्यभिव्यक्तिकराणि योगे ॥

नीहरधूमाकानिलानलानां = of snow, smoke, sun, wind and fire खद्योतविद्युत्स्फटिकशशीनां = of fire-fly, lightning, crystal and moon एतानि = these रूपाणि = forms योगे = in yoga practice ब्रह्मणि अभिव्यक्तिकराणि = in the manifestation of Brahman पुरःसराणि = precede.

Forms with appearances like snow, smoke, sun, wind, fire, fire-fly, lightning, crystal and moon precede the manifestation of Brahman in yoga practice. (11)

*Note.*—If these forms gradually manifest themselves during Yoga practice one can be sure that the manifestation of Brahman is not very far off. These represent the various stages of the mental modifications as one progresses towards the ultimate realisation.



पृथिव्यत्वेजोनिलखे समुत्थिते पञ्चात्मके योगगुणे प्रवृत्ते ।

न तस्य रोगो न जरा न मृत्युः प्राप्तस्य योगाग्निमयं शरीरं ॥.

पृथिव्यत्वेजोनिलखे—in earth, water, light, air and ether समुत्थिते = arising पञ्चात्मके=fivefold योगगुणे=perception of yoga प्रवृत्ते (सति) =when these have appeared योगाग्निमयं=made up of the fire of yoga शरीरं=body प्राप्तस्य=become possessed तस्य=his न=no रोगः=disease न=no जरा=old age न=no मृत्युः death.

When the fivefold perceptions of yoga<sup>1</sup>, arising from (concentrating the mind as) earth, water, light, air and ether, have appeared to the yogi, then he has become possessed of a body made up of the fire of yoga, and then he will not be touched by disease, old age or death. (12)

*Note*—The yogi understands that his physical body is a combination of the five elements and that his real self is separate from them, and that as such he is not affected by disease, old age or death which is inseparable from all material things which are always subject to change. His physical body he throws off into the fire of Yoga and takes up, as it were, a new individuality more pure than before. His physical body itself, he knows, does not change its essential Bhautika character, whatever changes it may undergo. Matter remains indestructible, so also the soul which is separate from it.

1. *The five-fold perceptions of Yoga, etc.*—The reference seems to be to the yogic practice, mentioned also in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, I, 35 of steadying the mind through fixing attention to one of the five senses of smell, taste, colour, touch and sound. This is done by concentrating on the tip of the nose, the tip of the tongue, the forepart of the palate, the middle of the tongue and the roof of the tongue respectively.

लघुत्वमारोग्यमलोलुपत्वं वर्णप्रसादं स्वरसौष्टवं च ।

गन्धः शुभो मूत्रपुरीषमल्पं योगप्रवृत्तिं प्रथमां वदन्ति ॥

लघुत्वं = lightness आरोग्यं = health अलोलुपत्वं = thirstlessness वर्णप्रसाद = clearness of complexion स्वरसौष्टवं = beauty of voice शुभो गन्धः = agreeable odour अल्पं मूत्रपुरीषं = scantiness of excretions प्रथमां = first योगप्रवृत्तिं = signs of entering yoga वदन्ति = they say.

It is said that the first signs of entering yoga are lightness of body, health, thirstlessness of mind, clearness of complexion, a beautiful voice, an agreeable odour and scantiness of excretions. (13)

यथैव विबं मृदयोपलितं तेजोमयं ब्राजते तत्सुधान्तम् ।

तद्वाऽऽत्मतत्त्वं प्रसमीक्ष्य देही एकः कृतार्थो भवते बीतशोकः ॥

यथैव -- Just as मृदयोपलितं = stained by dust तत् = that विबं = metal disc सुधान्तं = when cleaned तेजोमयं = brightly ब्राजते = shines तद् = so देही =

the embodied man आत्मतत्त्वं—the truth of the Atman प्रसमीक्ष्य=seeing एकः=sing बीतशोकः=free from sorrow कृतार्थो भवते=attains the goal.

Just as the same metal disc, which was stained by dust before, shines brilliantly when cleaned, so the embodied man seeing the truth of Atman realises oneness, attains the goal and become sorrowless. (14)

यदात्मतत्त्वेन तु ब्रह्म तत्त्वं दीपोपमेनेह युक्तः प्रपश्येत् ।

अजं ध्रुवं सर्वतत्त्वैर्विशुद्धं ज्ञात्वा देवं मुच्यते सर्वपापैः ॥

यदा=when युक्तः=the yogi दीपोपमेन=resembling a light आत्म-तत्त्वेन=by the truth of the Atman ब्रह्मतत्त्वं=the truth of Brahman प्रपश्यते=sees (तदा=then) अजं=unborn ध्रुवं=eternal सर्वतत्त्वैः विशुद्धं=free from all the modifications of Prakriti देवं=God ज्ञात्वा=realising सर्वपापैः=from all sins मुच्यते=is freed.

When the yogi realises the truth of Brahman through the realisation of the truth of Atman in this body as a self-luminous entity, then, knowing God as unborn, eternal and free from all the modifications of Prakriti, he is freed from all sins. (15)

*Note.*—This verse identifies the pure Spirit in man with the Spirit at the back of the universe, denoted by the words Brahman and God, and emphasises that this true knowledge of the nature of God and his affinity with the soul of man constitutes the means of perfection in Yoga.

एष ह देवः प्रदिशोऽनु सर्वाः पूर्वो ह जातः स उगमं अन्तः ।

स एव जातः स जनिष्यमाणः प्रत्यङ् जनास्तिष्ठति सर्वतो मुखः ॥

एषः=this देवः=God सर्वाः प्रदिशः अनु=who pervades all space सः ह पूर्वो जातः=he is the first born, the Hiranyagarbha गर्भे अन्तः=inside the womb सः=he एव=alone जातः=is born सः=he जनिष्यमाणः=is to be born प्रत्यङ्जानाः तिष्ठति=stands inside all persons as the indweller (Antaryamin) सर्वतोमुखः=facing all directions.

This self-luminous spirit in man is verily the supreme Divinity. He pervades all space. He is first-born Hiranyagarbha. He has entered into the womb. He alone is born and is to be born in future. He is inside all persons as the Antaryamin facing all directions. (16)

*Note.*—This verse identifies the various aspects of Nature as really forms assumed by the self-same Atman, and shows that the same Atman is behind all phenomena.

यो देवो अग्नौ यो अप्सु यो विश्वं भुवनमाविवेश ।

य ओषधीषु यो वनस्पतिषु तस्मै देवाय नमो नमः ॥

यः=which देवः=god अग्नौ=is in the fire यः=who अप्सु=who is in water यः=who विश्वं=all भुवनं=universe आविवेश=has entered यः=

who जोषीबु = in the plants यः = who वनस्पतिबु = in the trees तस्मै देवाय = to that god नमो नमः = salutations.

Salutations to the Divinity who is in the fire, who is in the water, who is in the plants, who is in the trees, who has pervaded the whole universe.

इति श्वेताश्वतरोपनिषदि द्वितीयोऽध्यायः ॥

Thus ends the second chapter of the Svetasvatara Upanishad

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### A Letter to the Editor

The following is a letter we received from Dewap Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri in connection with our comments on caste in the August number of this magazine :

I crave the hospitality of your columns to say a few words in regard to your fair and valuable criticism of my article on "the Caste system in the light of modern thought" in some of the recent issues of the Hindu mind. I wish to point out that unapproachability has become unapproachable and untouchability has become largely untouchable, and that so far as the question of temple-entry is concerned, the Agama Sastras are our guide, and that it is a pity that the move to build new temples where all could go for worship has now disappeared. Untouchability is largely a historical legacy intensified by unclean habits and professions and also by the few violators of the fundamentals of the Hindu socio-religious system—especially in the matter of marriage—getting mixed up with the separated group. The chain will have to be unwound as slowly as it was wound. There is no use in being angry or abusive. Cleaner habits and widespread education and a higher economic status and a greater political status are bound to raise the depressed classes. The fact is that all the Hindu communities are economically and politically depressed to-day. Just as a man who is not in

good health is peevish, depressed communities are peevish too! You know how desperately poor the Brahmin community is to-day and how its education has also deprived it of the one real value of life, i.e., a knowledge of God and His Law and His Love.

You refer to the Rajputs and ask if they "ever subordinated their clanishness and family pride to the larger interests of the country." Colonel Tod says : "The name 'country' carried with it a magical power in the mind of the Rajput." Rajputana had its Marathon and Thermopyle. But the idea of a unified and federated India was not then an active idea, though it was a known vision. Sister Nivedita says that large countries arrive at unity and full-self-consciousness later than small countries. Let us not blame them or our heroes on that account.

You ask "if we are now at the meridian of our glory and greatness." We are not, we are near the Nadir rather than the zenith. The caste system is not racialism at all. It is only self-protective, non-exclusive, non-competitive self-consciousness. Hinduism is not and cannot be reduced by it to the position of an ethnic religion as opposed to a universal religion. It is universal, as salvation is open to all and is not confined to those who are born in the caste system. Birth in the Hindu group merely gives us a richer heritage of *Sadhanas*.

Jnana liberates a human being wherever he may have been born. We believe in Dharma as we believe in the Ganga. To others their rivers merely remove bodily heat or are useful for excursions or economic purposes. But we believe the Ganga to be a richer Sadhana than that.

I hope that this letter will make it clear that the progressives among the Sanatanists cannot be labelled as mere fundamentalists, if it is wrong to be a fundamentalist. Dr. Ambedkar may like to annihilate caste. Some modern thinkers, like some ancient thinkers, may refuse to hold that the caste system is vitally connected with Hinduism. It has survived the latter and may, I believe, survive the former. You point out that the hereditary determination of occupation has gone. But are we to add Dharma Sankara and Varna Sankara to Vritti Sankara? Democracy requires free national service by all. Even then there is much to be said in favour of the old system. But why should we add fresh confusions? You say that inter-dining is increasing. To some extent it is. But why do you suppose that the forces of modern life have battered down the caste rules about marriage? The crossing of the line of blood is not easy at all. You seem to think that the observance of caste rules by educated men is a mere matter of convenience. I am afraid that that view is not correct. Nor are you right in saying that Hindu "fundamentalism" is in deadly opposition to the anti-untouchability movement. Many believers in caste are doing their best to uplift the Harijans to-day. You say that "the weight of educated opinion to-day seems to be on the side of the caste breaking tendencies" and that "the pure spiritual content of religion has no inevitable or even necessary relation with any social system." But individual life and social life and spiritual life are vitally inter-connected and the general name for all these aspects is Dharma. The dissociation of these aspects may be the old Buddha spirit. But the

Hindu spirit is not going to recapture it or to be recaptured by it.

### Our Remarks on the above

We are glad to publish this letter of our great friend, Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastri. The editorial of the August issue was not meant so much to criticise the opposed views of either Mr. Sastri or Dr. Ambedkar as to bring out a point of view with which many sincere Hindus to-day are in agreement. We therefore do not propose to consider here the views contained in the letter at length. To do so would only entail a recurring to the facts we have already stated and may not help further clarification. The position we maintained in the article referred to substantially stands, and it is not our purpose here to scrutinise the new controversial points raised by Mr. Sastri, especially with regard to untouchability. The question we have set forth with regard to untouchability is only this—Is it not like blowing hot and cold simultaneously, if one maintains at the same time that Hinduism encourages 'inter-worship,' and also that it insists on shutting away a large section of its followers from its places of public worship? To us it appears that Mr. Sastri's citation of the Agamas as the authority for the later practice only confirms further the inconsistency we had pointed out before. We are behind none in admiring the ancient Rajput heroes for their great qualities. Tod's praise of their patriotism also, however, loses much of its charm when we remember the case of Jayachandra who pawned India's freedom in the interests of a private feud. In our April issue we have stated elaborately our reasons for maintaining that the fundamentalist notion of caste reduces Hinduism from a universal to a racial religion. We do not understand how Hinduism can claim universalism solely because man can gain salvation by his sheer spiritual merit. That the Hindu group "gives us a richer heritage of 'sadhana's'" and that fundamentalism

would not allow non-Hindus the spiritual privilege of belonging to this "Hindu group"—these are the very tendencies in fundamentalism that threaten the most universal of all religions with the danger of racialism. Mr. Sastri assumes what we have not said when he questions a bit excitedly, "But why do you suppose that the forces of modern life have battered down the caste rules about marriage?" He would note that after our general statement regarding the weakening of caste rules we have made the very cautious remark: "... even in the matter of marital choice cases of violation of caste rules are not very rare at present." If one would recall the many prominent instances of such marriages reported by the press in recent years, and just note also the practically demonstrated opinions of two respected and sober Hindu leaders (not hot-headed reformers) like Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar, we hope we cannot be

accused of exaggeration or a revolutionary and impious suggestion for making that very moderate and guarded statement. Whether the innovation in question is good or bad is, however, another question. The opinion as to whether the majority of modern educated people observe caste as a pious duty or as a matter of convenience would vary according to people's experience; on such personal matters no referendum is possible. We admit the vital inter-relation between individual life, social life and spiritual life but could that exist in a house divided against itself? What we, however do not accept is the contention that any particular social system is the eternal spiritual appendage of a people born in a particular country and inheriting a particular system of religious thought. Changes in the social forms, even of a sweeping nature sometimes, are, we deem, both necessary and inevitable.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**The Saiva School of Hinduism: By S. Shivapadasundaram.** George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London. Price 6sh.

In this book we find a clear and popular exposition of Saivism mainly based on a study of Siva-jnana-bodham and Siva-jnana-siddhiar. The first two chapters are devoted to a distinction between conventional religion and real religion. The author characterises Saivism as real religion or love of God, and proceeds to expound the principal concepts of that school of thought. He regards the Sat-karya-vada as the central postulate of Saiva philosophy. "Something cannot come of nothing or become nothing." *Ex nihilo nihil fit.* God is posited as the intelligent being which has the power to guide the evolutionary process of the universe. The essence of all living beings is the soul; and since living beings are numberless, souls also are numberless. Though the soul has ability to know, to desire, and to do, it has not the energy or power necessary for these activities. That which supplies the energy to the soul is called Maya. But Anava blocks

the passage and prevents the flow of the energy that is offered. When through right action, right knowledge and the grace of God, Anava is completely overpowered, the soul becomes free and attains the ultimate goal which is 'becoming one with God.'

The book is well-written in an easy and interesting style. But the author need not have eschewed all discussion of the philosophical aspect of the system. He writes in the Introduction, "The philosophical part of Saivism has found very little place in this book, as the purpose of this work is to present only that side of Saivism which has a direct bearing on daily life. An important omission is the exposition of the various theories regarding the relationship between God and soul, as to whether they are one or two or neither." We believe that the purpose of expounding even the practical side of Saivism would gain by philosophical discussions. After reading through the pages of this treatise one finds himself landed in many a doubt regarding

Saiva philosophy unresolved. He is not able to understand, for instance, his own place in the Saiva scheme. What is the relation of soul to God on the one hand and to the world on the other? What philosophical sanction is there for believing the empirically perceived plurality of souls to be true? What is the nature of the goal which the soul seeks and strives for. What is meant by 'becoming one with God'? These are the doubts that assail the mind of the reader. But for this omission the book presents in a lucid manner and a flowing style the broad outlines of the philosophy and ethics of the Saivas.

**Dharma and Society.** By *Gulatherus H. Mees*, M.A., (Cantab.), LL.D. (Leyden). Luzac & Co., London. Price : Paper 9/6 d. net. Cloth 12/6d. net. Pp. XV & 206.

Dharma and Society is an unbiassed study of Hindu social institutions by a European scholar who believes in the beneficial effects of the East and the West realising their common humanity and the fundamental oneness of their realisations of the Truth and aspirations towards the Divine. Besides the insight and understanding born of his sympathy and admiration for Indian ideals, Dr. Mees has also the advantage of patient research and extensive study, of which the book bears ample marks. It is organised into two intimately connected parts of which the first aims to analyse and define Dharma and Varna in the ideal, theoretical and actual aspects from the view-point of the individual and the society. Basing on the recent conclusions of psychology and sociology an attempt is made in the second part to unravel the true implications of the two above conceptions with elaborate and comparative references to systems that have obtained in other civilisations. "These sociological thoughts and facts," says the author in the Introduction, "are still of so much bearing on actual problems" and they may still be beneficial "in pointing the way to new developments." The book may on the whole be taken to be an attempt to evaluate the two ancient social ideals of the Hindus in the light of Prof. Giddings' view, viz., that "the function of social organisation is the evolution of personality through ever higher stages until it attains the ideal we call humanity." An illuminating illustration for this is afforded, according to Dr. Mees, by the ancient

social theory of Varna which implies a 'vertical' scale—a natural hierarchy. Varna or natural class is taken to be the factor approximately determining the degree of culture and sociability. Based primarily on racial differences, in the long run that significance of Varna was lost and its place was taken by a correlation between cultural standards and occupation. Then behaviour as a member of the society determine the Varna. Varna, therefore, should be founded on work. This cultural conception of Varna, contends the author, has precedence over a racial or professional conception. Interpreted in this way the author perceives in Varna an international note and a universal ideal. The main import of this theory, it is clearly stated, is equal social behaviour, equal rights and equal social status. "The function of the higher Varna," says Dr. Mees, "is not to sit upon a throne of self-righteousness, but to serve the other Varnas with greater insight into the phenomena and with its deeper realisation of the nature and the oneness of humanity." Hence although at surface opposed to the horizontal view of humanity popularised by the democratic slogan of equality, this Varna ideal propounds a better theory based on spiritual equality. A mass of evidence has been adduced from the sacred books of the Hindus to substantiate this position. "True Brahmins," the author states, "conceived the theory of Varna and advocated it as the natural law of the evolution of society and as an ideal; the Brahmins as caste-upholders caused and contributed to the 'evils' of caste." In sifting scriptural authorities it has been observed, "If we find verses which are idealistic and logical and express lofty sentiments, they can in most cases be proved to be ancient." The inference is therefore clearly drawn that in social history a period of life is followed often by one of form and crystallisation. These are the main positions taken by the author in the course of the book.

The subject is an extensive and complex one which could very well bear a life's study and evidently Dr. Mees has shown signs of patient inquiry and intensive study.

We feel, however, inclined to note a point or two which may be improved in a coming edition. The central theme of the book is often complicated and crowded by

the after-thoughts and citations that are hammered into unity by headlines and paragraph divisions. Then again concision and elimination of repetitions are necessary if an augmentative presentation is to be forceful. There are few typographical errors unnoticed in the errata, e.g., P. 22, 1:15; P. 27, 1:3 and Abaninda for Aurobindo on P. 101, etc. These minor defects notwithstanding the book deserves careful perusal for the wealth of data supplied and the new lines suggested for further enquiry.

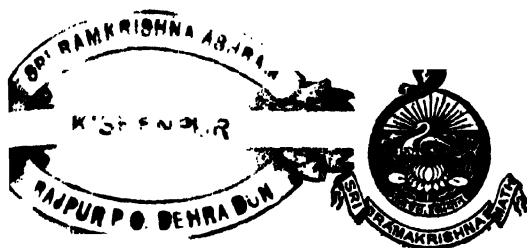
**The Mahabharata :** *Condensed in the poets' own words. Published by Messrs. G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras. Price Re 1-4. Pp. 494.*

This is an abridgement of our great national epic within the compass of about sixteen hundred couplets, i.e., little less than a sixtieth of the size of the original keeping the sequence of the great work. It consists of the text in Devanagari with a readable English translation. The present form of the book can very well be an interesting and very valuable introduction to beginners of Sanskrit. Advanced readers who are barred from reading the great encyclopaedic text either through want of sufficient leisure or by its repelling massiveness are, however, sure to get an earnest of the beauties of that great cultural treasure here in this curtailed self of the same. No translation could completely satisfy the accurate scholar in whose ears the stately march, quiet graces and condensed felicity of expressions in the original are fresh. The present one is at any rate eminently readable. Pandit A. M. Srinivasachariar who is responsible for condensing the work and Dr. V. Raghavan who has translated it have creditably done a task bristling with numerous difficulties. Just like its companion volume, the abridgment of the Ramayana, published by Messrs G. A. Natesan & Co., some time back, this book too eminently fulfils a cultural need of the time.

**Dasopanishads, Vol. 1. With the commentary of Upanishad-Brahmayogin. (Sanskrit). Published by the Theosophical Society, Adyar, Madras. Price Rs. 4.**

This forms a companion volume to the seven-volume edition of the minor Upanishads brought out in series by the Adyar Library. The present volume consists of the eight smaller ones of the major Upanishads, the larger ones, viz.,

the Cehandogya and the Brihadarnyaka, being left out to comprise the second volume which is to appear subsequently. Upanishadbrahmayogin's commentary on these major Upanishads, which for the first time appear in print, is naturally more comprehensive and elaborate than that on the minor ones. The author who so reverently refers to Sri Sankara as "*sarvajna-bhagavatpada*" might possibly have been a monk of his spiritual lineage, as it may also be surmised from the general similarity of expressions and the trend of exposition which is noticeable throughout his commentary. Although the Brahmayogin is fully imbued with the spirit of Sankara, he has not failed to evince remarkable discretion. He steers clear of the controversies to which the great Acharya has been drawn for refuting the positions contested by the rival schools. The whole commentary is couched in an attractively limpid Sanskrit style, and a direct and simple method of interpretation has been adopted keeping away from all technicalities as much as possible. Even where his indebtedness to the Bhashya is evident, we find a laudable endeavour to throw fuller light on the passages and expressions that are left out by his predecessors without detailed elucidation. Brahmayogin's original suggestions are always welcome and the scintillating humour that play about such passages as "*asad-eva-brahm'cti musala-kisalaya matinam vyamohah*" is really inescapable. Another passage which beautifully effects a golden synthesis of the Saguna and Nirguna aspect of Reality runs thus : *Niravadyaṃ api nirviśeṣaṃ Brahma Svopasanaya bhaktas svapadam bhajeyur iti anukampaya mula-vidyabijamsa'ng'esabhavam apannam*. With sufficient emphasis the saintly author declares :—*Nahi samadvairalyato'rishadvarga kabalitasya Brahmadvidya'dhikaro'sti*. This is a warning to the degraded Vedantic solipsist who wrongly reads moral transcendence. Any student of Vedanta, we are sure, will be sufficiently rewarded by a perusal of this eminently worthy commentary from the pen of a distinguished Mediaeval monk who is the only author known to us to have commented on all the 108 Upanishads with admirable cogency and unity of purpose. We are heartily thankful to the Theosophical Society for having brought to day-light from rare manuscript sources such a valuable work. The utility of the work has been greatly enhanced by the detailed contents and two appendices supplied by the editors.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

काम । जानामि ते मूलं सङ्कल्पात् किल जायसे । न त्वां सङ्कल्पयिष्यामि समूलो न भविष्यसि ।  
 अनुतर्षुल एवार्थः स्वादु गांगमिवोदकं । मद्विलापनमेतत्तु प्रतिबुद्धोऽस्मि संत्यज ॥  
 त्वया हि मे प्रणुनस्य गतिरन्या न विद्यते । दृष्ट्वाशोकश्रमाणां हि त्वं काम प्रभवः सदा ।  
 परित्यजामि काम । त्वां हित्वा सर्वं मनोगतं । न त्वं मया पुनः काम नस्योतेनेव रंस्यसे ॥  
 क्षमिष्ये क्षिपमाणानां न हिंसिष्ये विहिंसितः । द्वेष्यमुक्तः प्रियं वक्ष्याम्यनादृत्य तदप्रियम् ॥  
 दूतः स्वस्थेन्द्रियो नित्यं यथालब्धेन वर्तयन् । न सकांमं करिष्यामि त्वामहं शत्रुमात्मनः ।  
 निर्वेदं निर्वृतिं हृतिं शान्तिं सत्यं दमं क्षमां । सर्वभूतदयां चैव विद्धि मां शरणागतम् ॥  
 तस्मात्कामश्च लोभश्च दृष्ट्वा कार्पण्यमेव च । त्यजन्तु मां प्रतिष्ठन्त सत्त्वस्थो ह्यस्मि साम्प्रतम् ॥

Lust, I have known your source. Assuredly you are born of fancy. I am not going to entertain you in my imagination any more. You will then be rooted up along with your cause. Wealth is just an appetizer of lust even as the delicious water of the Ganges is to a parched throat. It spells ruin to me. I am conscious of it ; so begone from me. So long as I am under your dictates there is no escape for me. O lust, you are the fountain-head of thirst, misery and fatigue. Sweeping away all idle thoughts that crowd into my mind, I cast you out for good. You could no more sport with me as if I were under your reins. I shall hereafter forgive those who jeer at me. Should I be injured I shall refuse to retaliate. Caring not a trifle for the displeasure incurred by me, I shall rejoin with pleasant words clear of the least trace of anger in me. I shall conduct myself in life depending on what is immediately within my reach, ever contented and with calm senses. I shall put down all cravings of lust, my Soul's foe. Dispassion, peace, contentment, tranquillity, truthfulness, self-control, forbearance, charity for all,—mark you, in these I have taken refuge. Let lust, greed, hankering, and narrow meanness depart from me. I have set off towards the Goal. I am now established in my own inner strength and purity.

—Mahabharata, Santi Parva, Ch. 176, verses 25, 28, 33 & 42 to 46.



# SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

*By Swami Saradananda*

[Swami Saradananda was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master, is a close translation of the Swami's well-known Bengali work which is one of the most authoritative and exhaustive sources of information about the life and teachings of the Master. In this section is given an account of the transforming effect which the Master's company had on his Guru, the Bhairavi Brahmani.]

*Bhairavi had not attained the Non-dual State: Evidence for it.*

ALTHOUGH the Bhairavi was far advanced in spiritual life, we have clear evidence to show that she had not yet reached perfection by realising the supreme as the Non-dual and the Absolute. The following incident is an illustration of this fact. With the help of the Bhairavi the Master had already gained the highest spiritual realisations accessible through Tantric practices at the time when the unclad monk Totapuri, who was established in the Nirvikalpa or Non-dual state of consciousness, arrived at the Kali Temple of Dakshineswar in the course of his wanderings. Even at first sight Totapuri recognised in the Master an aspirant fully qualified to follow the spiritual path prescribed by Advaita Vedanta. So he initiated him into the holy Order of Sannyasa and instructed him in the mental disciplines leading to the attainment of Nirvikalpa Samadhi (Non-dual consciousness). When the Bhairavi came to know of this, she spared no pains in dissuading the Master from following that course. "My child," said the Bhairavi who looked upon the Master as her son and addressed him as such, "don't go to Totapuri frequently. It is not good to mix with him too freely. For, his is a dry path bereft of all emotions and sweet sentiments. Association with such a

person will destroy all your religious fervour and divine love." It can be very well inferred from this that although full of devotion to God, the learned Bhairavi did not know and could not possibly guess even that the Non-dual state, which she conceived and characterised as dry, is in reality the portal to genuine devotion of the highest type, that only those who are pure and enlightened and delighting in the Self alone can love God without any ulterior motive, and that, as the Master used to say, pure devotion and pure knowledge constitute one and the same thing. Our inference regarding the Bhairavi's ignorance of the highest Truth is further confirmed by the Master's conduct when he received initiation into the sacred order of Sannyasa from Swami Totapuri, and with shaven head and wearing ochre robe, he practised the disciplines leading to the Non-dual consciousness of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. For, he kept the news of his Vedantic initiation a secret from the Bhairavi as he did from his own aged mother who was then living in the upper story of the concert room of the temple. Besides, while engaged in these practices, he confined himself to a room for three days, and thus lived away from the notice of all men except Swami Totapuri who went to him occasionally. It is needless to add that the Bhairavi's warnings fell quite flat in the ears of the Master.

*The three types of aspirants according to the Tantras viz, the Animal, the Heroic and the Divine.*

From what we heard from the Master, the Bhairavi seems to have been an aspirant of the type technically called Veera or 'heroic' in the Tantras. According to this body of sacred literature there are three different methods of spiritual practice leading to God-realisation. These are called Pasubhava or the path of the animal man, Veerabhava or the path of the heroic man and Divyabhava or the path of the divine man. In an aspirant qualified only for the 'animal path' passions like anger and lust are very strong. He is therefore required to live away from objects of temptation and engage himself in devotional practices like Japa and Purascharana, with special attention to external cleanliness. In aspirants who are on the 'heroic' path, love of God preponderates over animal passions. In their case the attraction of sense objects only helps to intensify devotion to God. So they are to live in the midst of temptations, keeping themselves undistracted and endeavouring ever to dedicate themselves to God heart and soul. As for the 'divine path,' he alone can be a follower of it whose animal passions have been washed away once for all by the strong tide of God-love and to whom virtues like forgiveness, straight-forwardness, charity, contentment and truthfulness have become habitual like respiration. The highest aspirant according to Vedanta is a follower of this divine path of the Tantras. The mediocre aspirants take to the 'heroic' path, and the aspirants of the lowest order are fit only to follow the 'animal' path.

*Bhairavi was an aspirant of the heroic path; she could not yet rise to the divine path.*

Although occupying the foremost place among the aspirants of the 'heroic' path, the Bhairavi could not as yet attain to the 'divine' path. But by observing the striking example of the Master and through his help, the desire to rise to the 'divine' path gradually arose in her mind. She had noticed the strange reactions that the tempting objects of the world had on the Master. For, very often he would be overwhelmed with the love of the Divine Mother, the Causal Principle of the Universe, at the very mention of hemp and wine which are associated in Tantric mysticism with spiritual perfection and the primal Cause of the universe. Endowed as he was with such an exalted nature, there was no question of his partaking of them. Then again the form of any woman, irrespective of all questions of character, reminded him of the Hladini and the Sandhini powers (the bliss and the existence aspects) of the Divine Mother and roused in him the attitude of the child. The very touch of gold or any other metal made his limbs shrink even in sound sleep. Coming in contact with such a blazing fire of spirituality, how can the flame of divine love be left unkindled in the heart of any one? How can one help feeling disgusted with worldly possessions that last for a day or two and then pass away? How can one fail to bind oneself to God for eternity with the closest and dearest ties of relationship? That is why we hear of the Bhairavi spending the remaining period of her life in austere penances.

*This is proved by the Bhairavi's later conduct.*

We have also heard from the Master that the Bhairavi would be overcome with jealousy if the Master showed unusual intimacy with, or respect towards, any devotee of God other than herself. Her feelings in such circumstances become quite understandable if we remember that her attitude towards the Master resembled that of an elderly lady of a house towards a pet child. Having nursed and caressed the child for many years, the old lady cannot help being perturbed with jealousy when she sees her fond ward outgrowing the stage of dependence on her and even showing signs of love and affection for any other member of the family. But a spiritual aspirant of a high order as she was, the Bhairavi ought not to have become a prey to such petty passions and prejudices. She had opportunity to study the character of the Master minutely as he passed from one stage of mental development to another, and she ought to have known that in contrast to ordinary men, the Master's love and regard for persons never fluctuated like tidal changes, and that his heart, once given away to anyone, was given away for all time. But alas ! earthly love, especially woman's affections, cannot brook any independence on the part of the beloved person. It wants to exercise a strict control over the object of love, without allowing the least freedom, lest that object should stray away from its influence and bestow its love on some one else also. Little do women realise that this is a weakness of feminine nature, and that a love which is jealous of freedom in the beloved, which fails to take delight in the happiness of the beloved with com-

plete self-abnegation, is destined to perish at no distant date. Let it therefore be remembered by all, especially by women, that if you have actually given your guileless love to any one, then you may rest assured that your beloved too will ever remain yours in spite of the freedom allowed, and that your disinterested love will finally lead, not only you but your beloved as well, even upto God-realisation and freedom from all forms of bondage.

*The Bhairavi recognises this fault and goes to practise penance.*

It seems very strange that the Bhairavi failed to understand this truth although she was a devotee of great spiritual advancement. That she had these defects of character we know for certain. Her rare piece of good luck in gaining Sri Ramakrishna for her disciple also seems to have helped to increase her pride. 'I am the greatest of all. Let people obey me or they will come to grief', —thoughts of this kind too began to take possession of her mind. We have heard that she used to feel jealous even when the Master occasionally instructed the Holy Mother, and that as a consequence the Holy Mother would shrink away with awe in her presence. However, before long, through the grace of the Master, she became aware of this weakness of her mind. She came to know that under these circumstances she could control her mind only by staying away from the Master, and that her attachment for him was like a chain of gold which too had to be snapped for her advancement to the highest goal. This was the reason why the Bhairavi in the end left Dakshinেশ্বর and the Master's company. Remembering that a wandering ascetic

and a running stream never get polluted,\* she spent her remaining days

\* This adage is in vogue among monks who have renounced the world. The idea is that a monk, who is given to wandering continually, does not get attached to any person or object.

in visiting holy places all alone and in austere penances without any interruption. It is needless to add that this good sense was roused in her only through the help of the Master in his teacher aspect.

## THE PILGRIMAGE OF FAITH

[Man lives as much by faith as he does by bread. In the following paragraphs we have shown how the attempt to build the edifice of faith on a non-spiritual foundation leads only to disaster.]

### Dominance of Ideal in Life

MAN cannot live effectively unless he feels within the urge of a great purpose and experiences without the pull of a desirable end. Without such incentive he only vegetates and not *live* in the true sense of the term. Hence we find that in the life of individuals as well as societies and races periods of great achievement and creativeness are preceded by an overwhelming sense of a message to be delivered or a destiny to be realised. According to the nature of the spiritual and intellectual currents influencing a people's mind, this leading purpose of life has been conceived as individual liberation (Mukti) or as the rule of the proletariat, as the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven or as an endless progress for eternity, as the preparation for the Day of Judgment or as the triumphant assertion of a narrow nationalism and racialism. Whatever its form and its worth in the scale of valuation may be, it is the most vital factor to be reckoned in the psychology of a vigorous society; for on it depends the organisation of a people's will and emotion, and therefore the determining of the quality and power of their cultural life.

The various types of ideas that have dominated the life and thought of

men in different ages may be brought under two headings—the spiritual and the secular. This classification no doubt smacks something of the old world ideology, but like many things old and out of fashion, it conveys a definite significance which other classifications fail to do. To put the difference briefly, when we speak of a spiritual ideal of life we mean that life and its environment within our experience are not self-explanatory but self-transcendent in their significance and that we must therefore look upon our embodied existence not as an end in itself but as a means to a higher destiny. It does not necessarily mean barren other-worldliness, but it does signify that the true perspective of life can be had only against a background that is ordinarily hidden from us. In its application the ideal has no doubt innumerable variations and ramifications of which some may be healthy and many unhealthy, but broadly speaking this consciousness of an end may be described as the common feature of them all.

### The Faith of the West in the Past

Till a century or two ago ideas of the spiritual type used to have a very strong hold on the life of men. Accordingly the dominant purpose

which directed the life of the individual was the hope of realising a higher spiritual destiny while the social life received similar guidance and direction from the consciousness of a God-given mission of preaching a saving message among all the people of the world. This was the ideal even in Europe and America which we are to-day accustomed to look upon as the fountain-head of all secularist movements—of Nationalism, Internationalism, Humanism, Fascism, Nazism, Socialism, Communism and other gospels of social redemption that have caught the imagination of men to-day. A few centuries ago these seething centres of social, political and economic ideas and scientific thought were quite different from what they are at present. Men then knew what they lived for—that was the salvation of the soul; and they knew how to gain it—that was by receiving the sacraments of the church and living according to her teachings. They knew for certain that the world was created in 4004 B.C. and that the Almighty had designed the whole of this creation for the enjoyment of the children of Adam and Eve. The world, for them the centre of the universe, was like a big round table with the star-spangled canopy of heaven above, and the sun, the moon and the stars going in procession around it. If men did not hold conversations with God as the prophets of old did, they at least knew without the shadow of a doubt that He was in Heaven and from there directed the affairs of men. They were also certain of the burden of Original Sin, of the atoning virtue of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross and of the possibility of gaining salvation through faith in Christ. The great

task in life was the preparation for the dreaded Day of Judgment and men relied for this entirely on the help of the Holy Catholic Church, as members of which they formed the body of God. No narrow nationalism then compelled or even claimed their loyalty. For politics and religion were not yet separate, and except as subservient to religion politics was not intelligible to them. This political ideal dominated by a spiritual world-view found expression in the conception of Christendom with its twin institutions of the Holy Roman Empire and the Holy Catholic Church. Both derive their power and inspiration from God, but the first as representing the secular authority, was subservient to the second and existed only to aid it in its great work of spiritual ministration and Christianising of mankind. The Church of God was the most potent factor in the life of men, influencing their social, political and religious ideas alike, and in its teaching of the salvation of the soul men discovered the purpose of their individual lives and by identification with its mission of Christianising the world they realised the great directive purpose of their collective life.

### **The Faith of India**

In India a spiritual view of life largely holds good even to this day, though in matters of details and forms of application there are striking differences from the past. In a certain respect however the Hindu was much in advance of the Christian. For in spite of the crude notions of physics and physiography that we often come across in the Puranas,—such as the elephants and the snake supporting the earth, the great

Mountain Meru forming the axle of the Universe, the oceans of milk, curd, ghee, etc.,—we find however that the Hindu always had a very keen sense of the immensities of time and space. His cosmological speculations are as daring as that of modern science, and he has never been under the illusion that this puny planet of ours is the exclusive centre of the Almighty's attention or that the rest of creation has no other function except ministering to man's needs. There are unnumbered world-systems forming as it were the body of the Cosmic Spirit, now projected (Srishti) into manifestation for a long period in the immensity of time and now withdrawn (Pralaya) into its subtle condition of undifferentiated matter (Prakriti) for an equally long period. This cyclic projection and withdrawal, or Srishti and Pralaya alternate for eternity without any final end. The world in which we live has been for the Hindu, as for the modern scientist, nothing but a speck in this unimaginably stupendous cosmos, calling for no special claim on the attention of the Deity. Though thus free from the crude geo-centre bias of the old Christian world-view, the Hindu too is not entirely without a feeling of self-importance so natural to the human mind. For he believes that among the myriads of worlds constituting the cosmos, the earth is the best for the spiritual evolution of the soul. The other worlds, preponderating as they do either in joyous or depressing experiences, only afford opportunities for the souls to reap the fruits of their actions, but the earth with a more evenly balanced distribution of the sweets and bitters of life, provides a more favour-

able environment for the spiritual evolution of the soul.

According to the Hindu ideals, the great purpose of life at all its levels, sub-human, human or super-human, is the manifestation of the divine potentialities of the soul. This is achieved in the course of a succession of embodiments, determined strictly by the law of Karma, the ethical counterpart of the law of causation. These recurring embodiments, with their attendant experiences of pain and pleasure, discipline the soul and gradually draw out its latent spiritual powers until, in fulness of experience, its intuitive faculty is aroused and it gains a direct apprehension of its own nature and relation with God. This is Mukti, liberation from the trammels of Samsara (cycle of births and deaths). In this promise of the fullest development of his being, the Hindu finds the main purpose and incentive in life's struggle. As the preparation for the Judgment Day forms the motive power in the life of a pious Christian, so does the idea of Mukti (liberation) guide and unify the thoughts and activities of the pious Hindu.

In collective life, however, the Hindu never had anything so substantial and concrete as the Holy Roman Empire or the Holy Catholic Church to inspire his imagination and organise his will. In the place of the divinely instituted Church which made the preservation and propagation of the Christian ideal dominate the public consciousness, there was only the comparatively hazy idea of the Varnasrama Dharma, the eternal law of castes and their duties, instilling into men a common co-operative ideal of communal life and a high sense of the sanctity of duty. But it always re-

mained more an ideal than a full-fledged institution like the Catholic Church. Unlike the Church it was no powerful organisation at all, and what little of organisational power it had, it derived from its priesthood, the Brahmin class, who controlled the opinion of people as long as they were ritual-bound and depended exclusively on them, the Brahmins, for higher ideas. But the revolt against ritualism and the growth of more cosmopolitan educational agencies like monasticism and non-Brahmin scholarship always resulted in the relaxation of their hold, and led to the rise of protestant movements. The absence of a well-defined policy of missionary work was also another reason why the Varnashrama system, while acting as a leavening force on the thoughts and feelings of men, absolutely failed to organise their collective will and give it a direction towards a common purpose. The result of all this is that religious life in India did not develop as much objectivity as among Western Christians. For the Hindu, spiritual awakening of the individual rather than the spread of the doctrine has been the ideal of religion. Yoga, the practical method of divine communion, is what has all along engaged his most serious attention and elicited his best powers and potentialities—and not a passionate desire to spread a saving message as in the case of man in the West. To this difference in the operation of the forces of religion on the wills of men may also be traced ultimately the distinctive features of the Indian and the European minds—the detachment and spirituality of the Indian to the inward-going bias of his religious ideas and the European's aptitude for organisation and expression in the external world to his

early education under the ægis of the Church.

Now for us of the modern times the point of interest in all that has been said before, whether it relates to the East or the West, is this: The lives of men in the past were dominated and directed by certain convictions—unflinching faith in an all-powerful and all-gracious Divine Power at the back of the universe, the conception of the world as a school for the disciplining of souls, and the interpretation of life here as a great preparation for the salvation of the soul and a greater life in the 'Beyond.'

### **The Modern Revolution in Thought**

What distinguishes modernism from the pre-scientific age is the substitution of this view of life by the conception of a self-sufficient world and the dream of earthly perfectionism, or in its absence, by the distracting pain of an aimless and vacant life. While this inroad of modernism has affected old theories of life all the world over, its impact has had the most disastrous effect in the West, partly because the West is the home of modern science and partly because the old Christian world-view is specially vulnerable to attack, due to its dogmatic presentation and cocksure attitude in regard to matters where its ignorance is thickest. Perhaps the most important factor in this revolution in thought is the shrinking of man's importance in the new world picture as contrasted with his position in the old. The discoveries of modern astronomy deposed man from his proud position as the central figure and end of the universe, and made him an infinitesimal speck on a third-rate planet revolving about a tenth-rate sun drifting in an endless cosmic ocean—the limitless expanse of in-

terstellar space. The scientist's capacity to explore the secrets of the countless celestial bodies and gather details about their constitution and contents has increased to a remarkable extent, yet of God holding high court with angelic hosts and saints, there is no evidence in the whole of the vast and windy stretches of infinity. Much less is there any sign of life or any condition favouring its growth in all these countless heavenly bodies except in this miserable planet of ours. Could the Almighty, supposing there was one, argued the scientific thinker, have undertaken this endless task of creating a barren, meaningless universe, so that on this puny earth the exalted animals of the human species may hold their vanity fair and strut about in pride, nodding their head in approbation at the orderly setting of the universe to suit their convenience? 'Vain imagining, product of inconceivable conceit, self-importance and ignorance!' he declared with regard to the old world-view, and pooh-poohed it away as fit only for fools and imbeciles who cannot look boldly at the naked truth.

A noted thinker and well-known representative of the new way of thinking writes as follows on the cosmic drama with powerful sarcasm at the religion-making tendency of man:

"The endless praise of the chorus of angels had begun to grow wearisome; for, after all, did He not deserve their praise? Had He not given them endless joy? Would it not be more amusing to obtain undeserved praise, to be worshipped by beings whom he tortured? He smiled inwardly and resolved that the great drama should be performed.

"For countless ages the hot nebula whirled aimlessly through space. At

length it began to take shape, the central mass threw off planets, the planets cooled, boiling seas and burning mountains heaved and tossed, from black masses of cloud, hot sheets of rain deluged the barely solid crust. And now the first germ of life grew in the depths of the ocean, and developed rapidly in the fructifying warmth into vast forest trees, huge ferns springing from the damp mould, sea monsters breeding, fighting, devouring and passing away. And from the monsters, as the play unfolds itself, Man was born, with the power of thought, the knowledge of good and evil, and the cruel thirst of worship. And man saw that all is passing away in this mad, monstrous world, that all is struggling to snatch at any cost, a few brief moments of life before Death's inexorable decree. And Man said: 'There is a hidden purpose, could we but fathom it, and the purpose is good; for we must reverence something, and in the visible world there is nothing worthy of reverence. And man stood aside from the struggle, resolving that God intended harmony to come out of chaos by human efforts. And when he followed the instincts which God has transmitted to him from his ancestry of beasts of prey, he called it Sin, and asked God to forgive him. But he doubted whether he could justly be forgiven, until he invented a divine plan by which God's wrath was to have been appeased. And the present was bad, he made it worse, that thereby the future might be better. And he gave God thanks for the strength that enabled him to forgo even the joys that were possible. And God smiled, and when he saw that Man had become perfect in renunciation and worship, he set another sun



through the sky, which crashed into Man's sun ; all returned again to nebula : . . . . .

"'Yes,' He murmured, 'it was a good play ; I will have it performed again'."

Here we get a very effective statement of what exactly is disturbing the scientific thinker's mind. The complete dissolution of the old cosmological scheme, a sense of futility produced by the absence of any ultimate end in the world-order as science reveals it to-day, the feeling that religion is only an illusion created by the human mind in order to reconcile itself to a harsh and unavoidable situation—these are the thought-currents that have washed away the religious world-view from thinking men, especially of the West. We say especially of the West, because in India the corresponding classes do not feel the shock so severely, as the vastness and ultimate dissolution of the world were facts well-known to them even before the advent of modern science. But none the less the attempt made by science to give a mechanistic and self-contained explanation of the world has powerfully influenced thoughtful men in the East too and has given an impetus to sceptical thinking among them.

#### **Faith in Earthly Perfectionism**

As we said in the beginning, man cannot live without the prop of a conscious purpose. If the idea of soul's salvation fails to provide this under the altered conception of the universe and of man's place in it, then some substitute has to be found in order that man may be saved from the disaster of an aimless life. Why not turn our attention from the myths of God and soul—the phantoms of the feverish brains of theologians and ascetics

—and seek the purpose of life in the very tangible and practical ideal of promoting the physical and mental happiness of man here on earth ? So the scriptures and their promises, the dogmas and the sacraments, the Church and its divine mission gradually faded from the mind of man, and in the niches vacated by these arose the idols of State, Nation, Empire, Race, Class and Humanity. Caught up as he is in the welter of these new ideas, man in the West has been the first to transfer his allegiance to the modern deities, but we in the East too, belated as we always are in our ways of thought and action, have been burning our incense at the shrines of these deities.

For us who yet retain our faith in religion and its message, the interesting question is—have these gospels of earthly perfectionism brought us nearer the promised land than the so-called illusion they have contemptuously brushed aside. Under the ægis of nationalism Europe, growing fat at the expense of coloured races, used to speak at one time of the Federation of the World and the Parliament of Man, while the armies and navies of her greedy nations were busy binding the people of Asia and Africa with the chains of political and economical servitude. Nationalism, with its inevitable developments of jingoism at home and imperialism abroad, led to the inevitable crash of the Great War, thus exposing its complete hollowness and the arrant hypocrisy behind its tall talks of democracy, liberty, humanitarianism and disinterested pursuit of truth. To those sincere men who had discarded religion and transferred their faith to science, politics and social service, and used to talk of the never-

ending progress of humanity from lower perfection to higher perfection, this unprecedented holocaust in the name of the most cherished principles of the times came as a severe shock. It would have been enough to turn men into sceptics and misanthropes, if they were not creatures who live by faith and hope. So they interpreted the Great War as the war to end all wars, and in the infant League of Nations and the growing influence of Socialism and Communism over a distracted, impoverished and war-weary world, they saw the dawn of a new era and the glorious fulfilment of man's age-long struggles and sufferings. But then time and experience have dwindled the optimism of even the most inveterate and incurable of 'hoppers.' The Abyssinian episode, together with the still earlier violation of China's liberties proved the utter incompetence of the League and revealed the colossal hypocrisy, insincerity and selfishness that lie at the back of the whole affair. Socialism and communism, the other hopes of the world, have also belied the expectations they raised—the first by its readiness to compromise with nationalism and imperialism at every turn, and the other by its denial of every form of liberty. And what is more, they could not prevent the outburst of the most virulent and blatant form of Nationalism, with its appeals to the God of our fathers and the destiny of our race, with its cult of dictatorship and its creed of war, with its impatience of criticism and its denial of all liberties. The tearing up of treaties to pieces and the violation of all inter-national laws which appear so natural in such an atmosphere, are the portents of still bigger things to come. We get an indication of it in

the big armament race that is afoot and in the talks and rehearsals of air raids and gas attacks. The primitive man lived in fear of the wolves and tigers of jungles, and the cave was his shelter; to-day civilised man lives in still greater dread of the wolves and tigers of his own head and heart, and the precarious shelter he has devised is the gas mask. At no time had humanity greater reason than to-day to lose faith in itself and all ideals. For enshrouding our race on all sides are thick war clouds, threatening it at any time with the rain of shells and poison gas, and across their gloomy expanse appears the bomber, like a note of interrogation from the depths of the racial soul, mocking humanity, as it were, with the words: "You rejected God, Soul and Spiritual Life as mere illusions, and allowed yourselves to be carried away by the promises and blandishments of science. You separated the salvation of the soul from the salvaging of society, condemned the former as myth, and pinned your faith on the certainty of an earthly perfectionism. See whither it has led you? Can you extricate yourself from it—the net of your own making in which you have enmeshed yourself so hopelessly?" And the great statesmen, the shepherds of the modern world, answer, "No, we cannot," and go on with their war preparations with renewed vigour, while with their lips they sing sweet songs on the virtues of peace and the blessings of law and order.

Yet there are giants of faith among the believers in earthly perfectionism of whom H. G. Wells is perhaps the most noted. In one of his latest books "The Shape of Things to Come," he predicts an era of devastating wars

which will end in the establishment of the World, State and the Dictatorship of the Air. And yet in the whole of that bulky book the author has nothing to speak of the place of faith in God and of the spiritual regeneration of the individual in the realisation of this Utopia. When people, admitted on all hands to be responsible thinkers, are allowed to give such long rope to their faith in perfectionism, why should any one call the poor religionist silly for his faith in the spiritual destiny of even this sinful humanity, for his hope to see the face of God even through the thick shrouds of evil and ugliness.

### The Threat of Futility

But the average man of education and intelligence is no giant of faith. For him facts have dispelled the hopes of perfectionism. And yet he requires a faith if he is to live. The conspiracy of scientists and philosophers, by

the persistent advertisement of their crumbs of knowledge as the whole of truth, has also deprived him of the alternative faith in the inner life which religions used to provide. Caught between two fires—that of modernism on the one side and unpleasant facts on the other—he is bewildered, distracted and driven to despair. Futility, like Medusa's head, threatens him with her look. The diversions of lust and liquor may, for a time, shield him from her awful visage, but soon they will tire him out, and he will see that soul-deadening face staring at him straight in front. When he meets futility face to face, there is no escape for him. If he is impulsive and dreadfully earnest by nature, he seeks relief in suicide. Or else he becomes a neurotic—condemned to an unbalanced, miserable life.

Our suggestions for the reconstruction of faith in such a situation, we shall give in the next issue under the heading "Faith of the Future."

## MISSIONARY EFFORT IN INDIA

*By Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer, K.C.S.I.*

[In the following article Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyer gives a sweeping survey of the motives, methods and results of Christian missionary movement in this country. His remarks are mainly by way of a review of the well-known report recently issued by a commission of American Protestant laymen, under the title *Re-Thinking Missions*, but they also form a comparative study of the Lindsay Commission Report and throw valuable suggestions regarding the lessons which the example of Christian missions offers to the Hindus. Sir Sivaswami Aiyer points out how the presence of Christian missions in this country has stimulated social liberalism and missionary movements among the Hindus. We may perhaps not be wrong in saying that contact with Indian culture and religious thought has also exercised a similar leavening influence on Christianity by infusing it with greater religious liberalism. May we not claim that the tone of the Laymen's Report is itself a result of this influence ?]

FOREIGN Christian missions have been at work in India for a long time and it is only natural that attempts should be made from time to time to appraise their achievements and review the situa-

tion for the purpose of considering whether any changes are called for in policy or programme. The work of these foreign missions may be viewed from different angles. It may, for instance, be examined from

the point of view of the foreign supporters and subscribers to the funds of the missions, from the point of view of the communities in India and the main religions prevalent in India, or from the standpoint of world culture. Foreign missionary societies and those who subscribe to their funds are inclined to ask how far the activities of their missions have contributed to the spread of Christianity in India and what accession of strength has been received by the Christian church in India. Whatever other motives might have operated, the primary motive of the missionary societies has been the conversion of the people of India to Christianity. The societies and their supporters look forward to large conversions as the legitimate harvest of their activities. Though the activities of the missions have taken different forms and spread over the fields of educational enterprise, medical relief or agricultural and rural uplift, the primary motive behind all the activities has been to win over the people of India to the Christian church. Evangelism, direct or indirect, has been the purpose of the missions. Where it has not been direct, it has sometimes been described as a *preparatio evangelica*.

Quite recently the results of missionary work have been examined by two important commissions. One was the commission on Christian higher education in India of which Dr. A. D. Lindsay was the chairman. This commission was appointed by the International Missionary Council at the request of the National Christian Council of India. The commission was entrusted with an enquiry into the value of the mission colleges as a missionary method

under present conditions and the extent to which the mission colleges were contributing to the upbuilding and strengthening of the church. The members of this commission were mostly churchmen who had laboured in the field of higher education. The main object of their recommendations was to increase the efficiency of the Christian colleges in India by a policy of co-ordination and concentration of effort and by a re-organisation of the missionary colleges. The other commission was appointed by the Directors of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry of America and was composed almost entirely of distinguished laymen eminent in the field of education and other fields of public work. Among the questions which this commission had to consider was the attitude of Protestant Christianity towards non-Christian religions. The report of this commission was published under the title "Re-thinking Missions". Though the members of both the commissions were imbued with the spirit of Christianity, there is a remarkable difference in the spirit and character of the two reports. While the scope of the Lindsay Commission was restricted to the subject of higher education in the Christian colleges, the Laymen's Commission covers the entire field of missionary activities in India. The recommendations of the Lindsay Commission may fairly be summarised as directed to the one object of improving the organisation and efficiency of the Christian colleges from the evangelical point of view. The question which they put to themselves is whether all the educational work was calculated to draw men to faith in Jesus as their saviour and to the profession of their faith in bap-

tism. This is the point of view from which the whole inquiry has been conducted by the Lindsay Commission, and they did not concern themselves about the wider issues raised by the environment in which the Christian missionary has to labour, and the social, religious and cultural traditions and beliefs of the people among whom the mission has to carry on its work. They expect the Christian college staff to avail themselves of every opportunity afforded by the contacts of college life to lead their students to personal allegiance to Jesus Christ. Evangelism by every possible means is to be the dominant aim of the Christian colleges, without prejudice of course to the efficiency of education in the secular subjects.

Not merely in regard to the scope of the inquiry, but in other respects also the report of the Laymen's Commission offers a refreshing contrast. Representative as the Laymen's Commission was of the finest American culture, their report is distinguished by its breadth of outlook, sympathetic understanding and appreciation of the religions and cultures of the East, and keen insight into the psychological conditions of the problem. They have studiously endeavoured to adopt an objective attitude in the appraisal of the work of the Christian missions. What they mean by an objective attitude is explained by them as meaning not a coldly critical attitude, but one which endeavours to consider always the greater interest rather than the lesser, the good of humanity rather than the growth of a special movement. Mindful of the devotion of the workers in the missionary field and the pecuniary sacrifices made by

the supporters of the mission, they considered whether the missionary effort has been wisely directed and to its noblest ends. The result of the approach to the problem in this spirit is an admirable survey of the whole situation and a wise contribution to the right orientation of missionary enterprise in the East. In a report so remarkable for the excellence of its ideas and the felicity of its diction, it would be invidious to select any particular portion for special commendation. But if I were asked to make a selection for readers who may not have the time to read the whole report, I would suggest the first part which deals with general principles and gives the clue to the recommendations contained in the later portions of the book. The Laymen's Commission does full justice to the primary motive which has lain behind all missionary enterprise, namely, the urge felt by noble minds to share with the rest of the world the truths which they consider most valuable. It is the same spirit which has led seers and sages to proclaim the truth from the house-tops and to preach their creeds by the spoken or the written word. The passion for saving men, for helping them to overcome evil and misery and fear, no doubt implies a sense of the danger of the unsaved. While the distinguishing merit of Hinduism is its readiness to admit that there may be more than one door to salvation, the orthodox Christian believes in the impossibility of salvation except through allegiance to Christ and baptism, and believes that the souls of others are bound to be damned. The Laymen's Commission point out that God has not anywhere left Himself without witness and that the clean

breach method of the earlier missionaries with its uncompromising attitude towards local tradition, social scheme and religion involved an enormous cost in human suffering like medieval surgery, and that they failed to recognise that if a new idea was to take sturdy root, it should make a maximum use of whatever kindred ideas there have been before. The defects which the commission point out in the attitude of the earlier missionaries have not ceased to characterise the mental attitude of the missionaries and churchmen of the present time. The commission observe that the view that the religions of the East are responsible for the defects of oriental society and custom are the counterpart of the equally hasty social theory which makes Christianity responsible for all the advantages felt in western life. The defects observed in Hindu society are no more attributable to the Hindu religion than the glaring contrast between the practices of Christendom and the Sermon on the Mount. The claim that admission to the Christian fold implies a moral and spiritual re-birth is hardly justified by our experience of the failure of Christianity to influence the life of societies which have for ages followed the Christian creed. The failure of Christianity to dominate the economic and political life of the West and the relations between the nations of the world or between the white and coloured races does not certainly bear witness to any abiding influence of the Christian religion over its followers.

Three important changes in the world which are bound to affect the attitude and direction of missionary enterprise are pointed out by the

commission. The alteration in the theological outlook brought about by progress of science, the emergence of a world-culture with its attitude towards religion and the problems of society and the rise of nationalism in the East are factors which call for re-thinking on the part of the missions and a reconsideration of the Protestant attitude towards non-Christian religions. The missionary has to overcome a natural tendency to depreciation of the religions and cultures of the country. He must aim at the promotion of world unity through a spread of the understanding of the vital elements of all religions and must look upon himself as a co-worker with the forces which are making for righteousness within every religious system. Instead of regarding superstition as a special peculiarity of Hinduism, the missionary must recognise it as incidental to a low stage of general enlightenment and to every religion, including Christianity, in the pre-scientific era. Christianity will be true to its purpose and mission by aiding in the struggle to eliminate superstition from its own and other systems. It must carry out this duty "by promoting the scientific habit of mind and demonstrating its own fearlessness in the presence of science by making clear what the function of religion is in completing the unfinished world view of science, adding the element of value and meaning which science, taken alone, would omit, and by working with enlightened members of all faiths for a non-superstitious conception of Providence and prayer." While the members of the commission are devout believers in the truth of Christianity, their attitude to the non-Christian religions is directed by a spirit

of open-minded fairness. They recognise that the life of every living religion involves a constant groping for a better grasp of truth, that all fences and private properties in truth are futile and that the final truth, whatever it may be, is the New Testament of every existing faith. While they desire the triumph of that final truth, they consider it probable that the advance to the goal may be by way of the immediate strengthening of several of the present religions of Asia, Christian and non-Christian, together. The true Christian must look forward not to the destruction of the religions of Asia, but to their continued co-existence with Christianity, each stimulating the other in growth towards the ultimate goal of unity in the completest religious truth. They recognise the prevalent defects of pure evangelism even at its best and observe that the right approach to Christianity is not always by preaching the word. Evangelisation should be not by word, but by deed, not as a direct aim but as a by-product of a life whose sources of energy make their own report. It does not dispense with the use of verbal interpretation when a real desire is expressed to know why and how men are led to live that way. In short they believe in evangelising by living and by human service. On this basis they wish Christian philanthropic work to be freed from the responsibility for evangelisation; and they apply this principle to the educational, medical and other aspects of philanthropic mission work. The Laymen's Commission have realised far more clearly than the Lindsay Commission that the real issue that confronts the modern world is not conflict between

one religion and another but between religion generally and no religion, and that in this conflict it is to the interest of all religions to unite their forces instead of dissipating their energies in futile controversies about their rival merits, and that the one goal of all religions is the promotion of the highest good of humanity by leading individuals as well as society to a higher way of life. The conception of a 'good life' includes the salvation of the individual as well as the service of humanity at large. Both these aims have been inculcated by the religions of the East as well as by Christianity. There has been a difference of emphasis on this or that aim in different epochs.

What has been the influence of the Christian missions upon the life of the people of India? The most tangible result and the one to which missionary enterprise has looked forward as its aim is the conversion of considerable sections of the population, especially among the Depressed Classes. The result of a change of faith has been to raise the social status of the converts and their descendants, and to enhance their self-respect. The conversions have been due not so much to religious conviction, as to the unsympathetic attitude of the Hindu social system and the temporal and social advantages offered by such a change. It is the prospect of these advantages that is responsible for the threat of mass conversions by some of the political leaders of the Depressed Classes. Very little success has attended the proselytising efforts of the missions among the higher and the intellectual classes of Hindu society, and they have hardly been able to gain any adherents from the followers of

**Islam.** The prospect of any large accession to the strength of the Christian church by conversion will depend upon the attitude of Hindu society towards the Depressed Classes.

Apart from the direct results by way of proselytism, the missions have exercised a very considerable influence upon the well-being of the people of India. Their activities have borne valuable fruit in the spread of education, in the relief of suffering and in various other ways. But the intangible influence of missionary work upon the minds of the people of India has been even greater and more valuable. Even where the reaction of Hindu society has been hostile or unfavourable to the reception of Christianity, its influence must be regarded as distinctly beneficial. The encroachment of Christianity upon the fold of Hinduism has stimulated the revival of Hinduism by way of a defensive reaction. It has led the thoughtful sections of the Hindu community to realise the necessity of rectifying the abuses which have crept into Hindu religion and of bringing about an adjustment of orthodoxy to the needs of the changing order of modern times. The need for better organisation and vigorous propagandism has also been brought home to the minds of educated Hindus. The missionary activities on behalf of Hinduism which are now in evidence largely owe their inspiration to the lesson and example of the Christian missions. The spirit of devotion and earnest lifelong work of the Christian missionary is an outstanding object lesson to the people of this country. It is this aspect of mission work which calls for unqualified admiration. As observed by the Laymen's Commis-

sion, Christianity is a powerful ferment in any community when it is presented by persons who command the respect of that community, and it has stirred much constructive social thought.

One is led to enquire why there has been a lack of missionary enterprise among Hindus in modern times. Hinduism of old was not wanting in the missionary spirit of propagandism. The missionary enterprise of Buddhism and its conquest of Eastern Asia are well known. Hindu religion was carried to Java and other countries in the near East more perhaps as an incident of colonial settlement than as the direct objective of missionary effort. The lack of missionary enterprise for the spread of Hinduism may be ascribed to two or three main causes. The passion for saving souls, which is the primary urge of missionary effort, has not been wanting in India. The great religious leaders, whether in ancient times or even in comparatively modern times, have not been wanting in religious fervour or in the intensity of the desire to spread what they considered to be the true faith. There have also been several movements for reform of Hinduism. But these movements have been mostly confined in their scope to the Hindu community itself and to India. India is a vast country which offers an ample outlet for the missionary spirit and energy, and the religious leaders and reformers have been content to work within the limits of their own country. The value of corporate organisation as an essential instrument of propaganda has never been properly appreciated by Hinduism. But a more important reason for the absence of missionary enterprise among non-Hindus and in foreign



lands is the belief engendered by the theory that Hindus are born and not made. This belief is one of the unfortunate results of the caste system which, whatever purpose it might once have served in the maintenance of a static social organisation, is ill-adapted to modern conditions. Yet another circumstance which has stood

in the way of missionary effort is that though he considers Hinduism the most satisfying religion, the Hindu is modest enough to believe that he has no monopoly of religious truth and is quite content that the followers of other creeds should seek salvation according to their own needs and their historical traditions.

### THREE STAGES OF VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

*By Haridas Banerjee, M.A.*

[Mr. Banerjee is a research scholar in the Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner. The study of the three states of waking, dream and sleep is an important part of Vedantic Metaphysics. Mr. Banerjee gives in this article his estimate of what the study of the three states can do in arriving at the Vedantic truth of the existence of self and illusoriness of the world. According to him this method of enquiry cannot establish the Vedantic truth on the basis of experience; for, dream and sleep cannot be taken as clear and distinct facts of experience, and they give rise to problems. The value of this method consists in that it gives us some striking illustrations regarding philosophic development in Vedantic enquiry. The waking state stands for the stage of philosophic thought in which the self feels identified with the body and therefore takes itself to be one object among several objects. The dream state in which the self feels comparative detachment and experiences itself as mere onlooker corresponds to that stage of enquiry when everything objective is found to be bristling with contradictions (*Anirvachaniya*) and as such a riddle detached from oneself or a discrepant content of thought. In the third stage of enquiry the self, finding the objective world to be self-contradicting and therefore not self-evident, loses all interest in it and withdraws its attention to itself and gets absorbed in the bliss of self-enjoyment without being aware of any object. The state of deep sleep corresponds to this self-absorption.]

**T**HE ultimate test of philosophy is our common experience. Truth of philosophy may be realised in a possible experience but the experience in which it is realised is possible only on the ground of actual experience. Though ultimate truth is not realised in our ordinary experience, yet we must have at least the faint glimmerings of it in our experience before we accept it as truth.

Appealing to experience of love Hegelians wish that others would accept their philosophy. A man feels himself one and the same with another man whom he deeply loves. In

sincere love two persons, though different in form and independent of each other, become one. Kantians justify their theory that understanding makes nature on the ground of actual imagination. Golden mountain as a content is not given as such. Gold and mountain are there. In imagination, the mind passes from gold to mountain, and connects them. As the mind connects them, golden mountain as a content appears before it. The Empiricists contend that the truth of their philosophy can be realised if a man looks to his mind when it is passive. In a vacant mind

ideas come and go and sometimes group themselves according to their own way. In this way every philosopher tries to justify his theory by appealing to the facts of experience. If a Vedantist claims to be a philosopher and entertains the hope that his philosophy would be accepted by others, then he, too, must justify his theory that 'self is and the world is not' by appealing to experience.

Some students of Vedanta point out in defence of their theory that when a man shuts his eyes and closes his ears and nostrils, he is not conscious of the world of colour, sound and smell but only of his own self. On the strength of this fact of experience these Vedantists conclude that if all the sense-organs are absent there will be, then, no consciousness of the world but simply consciousness of one's own self. Here our aim is neither to state nor to criticise the logical significance of any argument but simply to take notice of the facts of experience. Vedanta admits that pure self-consciousness is the only reality. Our task here is to see whether at any moment of our life we come across such a state of pure objectless self-consciousness. What Vedantists of this school say is certainly not a fact of experience. A man who is born blind and deaf has certainly no consciousness of colour and sound, but he cannot on that ground be said to have pure self-consciousness. He is conscious of his body at least. What happens to his consciousness when a man is dead or when all his sense organs are absent, we cannot ascertain. To assert that there is self-consciousness or to deny that there is any, is equally absurd.

Some Vedantists try to justify the Vedantic doctrine on the strength of

the experience of a man waking up from sound sleep that he has only consciousness of his own self and not of anything else. It is, however, very difficult to deal with this fact of experience, for it does not allow of any reflection. I can reflect on the object of my seeing, for in reflection I recognise it. But difficulty arises when I am to reflect on a content, of which I am only indefinitely conscious. Then again what exactly is the state of consciousness at the time of waking up cannot be demonstrated. At that time, though there is no consciousness of a definite content, yet there is consciousness of an indefinite content. Thus there is no pure objectless self-consciousness in that experience. Looking at it from the point of view of one's own experience there is no explicit self-consciousness in this state. Those who hold that there is explicit self-consciousness cannot prove their statement and we, too, cannot disprove their statement, for consciousness here never becomes a content to be reflected on. It does not allow any prediction. So, what at best we can do is to look to our own experience only. Thus according to our own experience we find that these Vedantists fail to vindicate their theory.

Now to turn to what most of the Vedantists say in defence of their doctrine. Most of the Vedantists find the truth of the Vedantic doctrine in what they call the three states of self—waking, dreaming and sleeping. In waking state the world is taken as real. In this state the world appears to be very solid and stable. In waking state the self seems to be very intimately connected with the objects. In dreaming state the actual world is lost. In this state there is,

no doubt, a world—a world which is generally called as dream-world; but this world appears to be very unstable. It seems to be very loose and floating. In dream state the self is not so much attached to the object. It is a mere onlooker. Dream objects come and go and sometimes combine themselves into a definite whole according to their own way. The most striking difference between the dreaming state and the waking state is that in the waking state the self appears to be in the very object itself, but in the dreaming state, though the object is there, it is not felt as identified with the self. It floats before the self, or the self as separated from the object sees before itself the loose object. While in dreaming state there is still a loose object, in dreamless sleep there is no object at all. In this state though there is no object, there is yet the self. We believe so because if there were no self in sleep, we could not have made such statement as, 'I enjoyed very sound sleep'. Thus we believe that in the waking state the self feels itself intimately attached to the object, in dream state the self feels itself as standing apart from the object and in sleep state there is the self alone and no object. Can there be any justification for this belief?

That in the first state we feel ourselves identified with the objects, there is no doubt. All of us say 'This is my body,' 'This is my table,' 'This is the world in which I live.' Difficulty arises with regard to the other two states. When a man dreams, he is not conscious that he is dreaming. If he is conscious that he is dreaming, then he is not at all dreaming but waking. But that he can remember and reflect on what he

dreams, cannot be denied. We can remember only what we self-consciously experienced before. Here though there is no self-consciousness in experience of a dream content, yet there is memory of the same. How is this possible? Dream state thus gives rise to a problem for the psychologists to solve. In sleeping state there is neither any consciousness of the object nor is there any explicit self-consciousness. We cannot make any statement whatsoever with regard to the sleeping state. That there is no explicit self-consciousness, cannot be asserted, for assertion implies it. Whether there is any self-consciousness or not in sleep is also thus a problem for the psychologists. But we *simply believe* that in sleep the self alone remains and not any object-consciousness. The Vedantists cannot claim to have the glimpse of Ultimate Truth of Vedānta in sleep state.

Dream and sleep states, therefore, cannot be taken as clear and distinct facts of experience. They give rise to problems. *However, these states, as we uncritically take them to be, may be well accepted as facts of experience to serve as illustrations to bring home the different stages of Vedānta philosophy. These states, as understood and accepted by common sense, well represent the different stages of development of Vedānta Philosophy. The significance of these states in Vedānta lies in showing the philosophic development.* How they do so, we shall presently see.

I am surrounded by the countless things of the world. These things act upon me and I too, at once react upon them. This action and reaction go in such a way that I seem to be an object among other objects. All my activi-

ties, bodily and mental, are determined by the things of the world. The world is so vast, and so great and powerful are the activities of its forces, that it is quite natural to suppose with the materialists that I am a manufactured product of this gigantic workshop of the world. Instead of taking the world as an object before me, I take myself as an object in the world. No doubt, my desires, thoughts and feelings do not allow me to be reduced to a product of the world, but they are so determined by the things that I find myself quite lost or entangled in them. In no way can I make myself free from this entanglement or separate myself from the world and reduce it to an object before me. I find myself identified with the body, and the body is undoubtedly an object among other objects.

Philosophy begins with this ordinary waking state experience and rises to a higher state, i.e., the state in which *the self and the world are not found as closely connected with, but as separated from each other*. When I try to know the world in which I live, I then begin to feel myself detached from the object. Trying to know an object means striving or struggling to know it. In this struggle to know the world, I do not feel myself in the world but as a being as powerful as the world is. In this struggle the self and the world stand opposed to each other, and the mighty world which seems in the former state to be so powerful as to swallow everything appears now to be an object before the self. In the former state the world is all in all and the self is, as it were, a part of it, but in this state the self and the world stand on equally solid basis. One cannot absorb

the other. In this state the self and the world meet face to face with each other, no doubt, but the self is not yet totally detached from the world. The self is attached to it, for the self tries to know it. The world is still there, though it now stands before the self.

In its attempt to know the object, the self is baffled. All its attempts end in utter failure. It cannot know the object. The object becomes a riddle to it. All the concepts by which the self tries to grasp the object give rise to insoluble antinomies. Nothing can be asserted, for the opposite of every statement is equally assertable. That 'the object is' cannot be asserted, for that 'the object is not' can also be asserted at the same time. The statement that 'the object is and is not at the same time' is self-contradictory. Whatever is self-contradictory cannot be known. There is no higher concept in which all these contradictions can be resolved. Every concept, according to Vedanta, is antinomous. According to Hegelians the self at first in immediacy is quite at home with the object. When it rises from immediacy to know the object, it meets with oppositions and contradictions every where. But to Hegelians, the self again feels at home with the object by overcoming all oppositions and contradictions in a higher concept. Thus when the object is ultimately known, there is no hostility between the self and not-self. To know an object is to be intimately connected with it. According to Vedanta, in the first state, the self is, no doubt, very intimate with the object but when it tries to know the object, it cannot know it, for the concept of the object gives rise to antinomies. The self cannot solve these antino-

mies, so the object remains for ever to the self as something Anirvachya or riddled with contradictions. Whether Vedanta is right in maintaining that all concepts give rise to antinomies, we are not to discuss here. We are only stating how the Vedanta treats the concepts of thought. According to Vedanta nothing can be said of this world. It is unspeakable. It is unknown and unknowable.

The statement that the world is Anirvachya and unknowable is not a statement of thought. It simply expresses the self's feeling of failure in knowing the world. The world does not cease to exist because it is Anirvachya (unspeakable). The self feels the world, though it cannot know it. But the self in this stage does not feel a solid and stable world of waking state but something shadowy and inexpressible. To feel a content as antinomial is to feel oneself as completely detached from it. To feel a doubtful content is to feel it as separated from oneself. The world now hangs loose or merely floats before the self. The self is quite passive and sees this floating world as something vague and indefinite. It has now no interest in this world. In its failure to know the world it has now got all its connections with the world severed. This is a fact of experience. When a man tries to know reflectively the table which he sees before him and finds that he cannot know it because every concept with which he tries to know it gives rise to antinomies, he in his failure to know the table feels it as something Anirvachya, floating before him. Afterwards when he ceases to reflect on the nature of the table, he again feels at home with it and says in

wonder, "This is the solid table which I have tried so much to know."

It is, however, difficult to feel oneself detached from one's body. The self is in immediate relation with the body. It is very difficult even to make the body a content of reflective thought. A man always feels his body from within. In trying to know the body a man, no doubt, tries to see his body before him as a content of thought separated from himself, but he fails to present his body before him, for his feeling of body never ceases. Body is always immediate to the self. Whatever else is first presented to the self is also, no doubt, a mass of feelings in immediate relation with the self, but when the self tries to know that presented mass, it can feel itself detached from that. But the body, whether it is known or not, remains for ever as a mass of feelings in the experience of the self. It is true in case of thinking, desiring, etc., the self feels itself distinct from body but it never feels itself as separated from it. Can any man feel as if he is attending to his body before him? However, if body be an object like other objects and if the self in its attempt to know finds it as antinomial, then the self must feel itself detached from it, for it is a fact that to feel a content as antinomial is to feel oneself detached from it. It is also difficult to feel oneself separated from the world as a whole, for the world as a whole is not certainly a content of experience to any finite individual. When we feel ourselves detached from certain objects, we are explicitly or implicitly attached to some other objects. However, this does not bar out the possibility of making the world as a whole the content of thought and feeling it as antinomial. The com-

plete realisation of the Vedantic truth is possible only for the person who feels the world with his body as Anirvachya (riddled with contradictions). We do not dispute the possibility of the realisation of Vedantic truth here, for we find sometimes in our experience the complete detachment from particular objects. This Anirvachya state of our experience can be to some extent compared with the dream state in which the self, remaining passive and unconcerned, sees the floating content before it.

Now to come to the third state of deep sleep. In the second state the object is reduced to a shadowy antinomous content and self is passive and unconcerned with regard to that content. The self, though passive, sees that content before it. In the third state the self is concerned only with itself and does not take notice of the content. Whether the content exists or not, it is not at all interested to know. Knowledge is truth. It is self-evident and self-shining. The self first tries to know the object but all concepts regarding the object are not found to be self-evident but self-contradicting.

When the self withdraws its attention from the object and turns to

itself, it finds itself as self-evident. The self cannot be doubted. To doubt the self is to assert it. It justifies itself and cannot be justified by any other thing. To know a thing is to enjoy it. When the self knows itself, it enjoys or loves itself. In self-enjoyment, the self loses sight of the shadowy object. In self-love the self is lost in itself and knows only itself. It does not know whether the object is there or not. It is a fact of common experience that in case of extreme love and enjoyment, a person is not conscious of any other thing except the object of love and enjoyment. So, in case of self-love or self-enjoyment the self is only conscious of itself and is not aware of the existence of any other thing. This state is generally compared to the sleeping state in which, as it is believed, the self only enjoys itself and is not conscious of any object.

It is only in this state of self-absorption in which a man, after feeling his body with surrounding objects as something vague and inexplicable, turn to his own self and finds it quite secure and self-evident that he gets the glimmerings of Vedantic truth.

## MEDITATIONS

*By Anilbaran Ray*

[Mr. Anilbaran Ray is a Sadhaka of Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, Pondicherry. In these meditations he sheds much light on several difficult problems of spiritual life.]

### WILL

**WE** do not realise how powerful our will is unless and until we consciously make the best use of it. We allow our will to lie dormant in us and so live a poor, weak, miserable life.

By the exercise of resolute will we can conquer the strongest temptations, we can find our way out of most difficult situations and patiently bear the worst sufferings, and pass through most trying ordeals. The richest treasures of human life are opened to the

man who has a strongly developed will and knows how to use it.

And it is the force of will in us which can be used as a lever to exceed and rise above humanity. Before sincere, clear, resolute will all difficulties and obstacles on the path of the *sadhaka* disappear as darkness before the burning torch. When the Buddha willed that until he obtained the Truth, he would not budge an inch from his seat of Sadhana, even if his body dried up and his flesh and bone and skin fell to pieces, at that very moment victory was assured to him. The will that was in the Buddha is waiting to be roused and awakened in every man to lead him triumphantly to his destinies.

This will in us, after all, is a derivative power, a reflection of Thy will in us, O Mother, and this is the secret of its strength; it is here to take us back to Thee. Purified and transformed, when our will is identified and united with Thy will, it becomes irresistible and all-conquering and an effective instrument of Thy manifestation on earth.

We allow our will to run in all directions impelled by desires, obscured by ignorance, torn by passions; hence it becomes weak and ineffective and our greatest efforts often produce so poor results. We go on groping and stumbling in the world and are baffled at every step.

To make our will really strong and effective, we have to free it completely from ignorance, egoism and attachments. Nothing can happen in this world unless it is willed by the Divine, and what is willed and decided by the Divine, nothing on earth or anywhere can resist. We have to know this Divine will and put our own in harmony with it—then the highest force

in the universe will be at our back, and all things, all obstacles will inevitably yield and bend before us.

Instead of blindly dealing with the forces at work, we have to know the central truth of all forces and movements and exercise our will accordingly; we can get this knowledge and put our will in harmony with the Divine will by freeing our mind from all mechanical thoughts, all preconceived ideas and prejudices, and sincerely opening it to the Truth above.

This union with the Divine is the true skill in work, and it becomes more and more complete and perfect as we grow in surrender and devotion to Thee, Divine Mother.

#### TRUE ATTITUDE

Everything will be done for us by the Mother, if only we can keep the true attitude.

All our attention now is turned towards the thoughts and feelings and works that go on in us; we regard them as our own, as an essential part of ourselves. We remain absorbed in them and think that our life will become dry and empty without them. But in truth they are the movements of the lower Nature carried on in her blind and groping fashion; they are imperfect and perverted expressions of our higher nature in which alone we can have our true life.

We think if we turn away from these lower movements, we shall cease to be, but the truth is that by such dissociation, the lower play will cease, making room for the higher. It is always Nature which works in us, though we ignorantly regard ourselves as the doer—only we have to replace the lower play of Nature by the higher, by dissociating from the one and aspiring to the other.

It is sheer ignorance to think that if our mind becomes still and does not enter into the lower play, all our life will cease to be. As we keep our mind constantly engaged in the lower movements, the higher truth cannot manifest in us. We must turn away our mind from everything else and keep it constantly fixed on Thee, Divine Mother ; thus it will become calm and pure, and using it as a free channel or instrument Thou wilt work out our transformation.

Every bondage to the lower life that I cut asunder, every attachment, however small, that I renounce gives me such a relief, such a sense of freedom and joy. And the consciousness of the persisting bonds makes me so miserable.

It is good, Mother, that all my latent weaknesses and defects should thus be brought out and placed before Thee ; as Thy light fall upon them, they will be corrected and transformed. It is not really a divided life that

I am living, my whole life is forming round Thyself, nothing else can have any allegiance from me. The old movements that still persist, besides those which are purely mechanical, are suffered to have their play on account of their supposed insignificance ; or they come in plausible disguises as being sanctioned or originated by Thee. With more light, more alertness, they are bound to disappear leaving Thy sway absolute in me.

My allegiance to Thee, Mother, rises spontaneously from the depths of my being, and it has given me the taste of the truest love and joy. I am weak, ignorant and impure, but I have dared to love Thee, Mother, with all my heart and soul, and therein lies my hope. In Thy grace, Thou wilt correct all my defects, raise me out of all human meanness and impurity, and make me worthy of Thy divine love and affection—with all my faults, I entrust myself entirely into Thy hands.

## GITA AND THE VEDAS

*By Prof. Dharewar, B.A.*

[Mr. Dharewar is the retired Sanskrit Professor of the Osmania University. Indian tradition maintains that all wisdom is derived from the Vedas. Prof. Dharewar shows how this is true of the Gita, the quintessence of Indian spiritual wisdom. He points out how the Gita has drawn inspiration from the Vedas and has only elaborated and restated some of the Vedic conceptions.]

**T**O the Hindus the Veda is the most ancient, sacred and authoritative Revelation, and from it has flowed all that is sound, beautiful and enduring in later Hindu culture, such as the Upanishads, the Gita, the Ramayana, etc. Yet this fact, it is sad to note, has not been acknowledged fully and clearly as it deserves to be, among modern writers. There are in these famous books so many

ideas and thoughts and aspirations not only parallel but even identical that to the unbiassed critical eye the fact stands clear that the Veda has all along been the one main source of inspiration to all the rest. The debt that these later books owe to the Veda is so great and clear that it is time it should be made known to the public.



Not only have writers on the Upanishads and the Gita failed to acknowledge this great debt those books owe to the Veda, but many a one has misinterpreted Upanishadic and Gita passages to show that the Veda is actually scorned and scoffed at in them, and that the teachings of those books are even antagonistic to Vedic doctrines. These admirers of Gita and the Upanishads believe that these works are superior to the Veda which they think is crude and inferior in spiritual matters. Thus these men have committed a double wrong in misleading people and putting them on the demoralising diet of falsehood. Their duty was to compare carefully the ancient books and collect all those sublime concepts and ideals that are common to them, proving the fact how closely the Gita as well as the Upanishads follows and amplifies a good many Vedic principles, and are therefore mere expositions and commentaries elucidating some of the eternal Vedic truths. Instead of doing this, they have followed a wholly reprehensible course in vilifying the Veda by trying to show against clear facts that the Upanishads and Gita are anti-Vedic in their attitude towards the most ancient Scripture of humanity, the Veda. Forty years ago the present writer knew Gita but nothing of the Veda. While reading the commentaries and translations of Gita, he was struck by the anti-Vedic constructions put upon some Gita verses ; and this led him to study the Veda in order to see how far the charge against it is sustained by facts. During the last forty years, while studying these ancient and medieval sacred books, he has been struck by the discovery of a large number of beautiful, helpful, noble and lofty

thoughts and ideals revealed in the Veda which, as it were, are the root-ideas from which have sprung up in later times the Upanishads, the Gita, the Ramayana, etc. In fact, the relation these later works bear to the Veda is somewhat like the relation that exists between the moon and the sun, the Veda being the Sun of Revelations.

It may be pointed out here that the very Gita conception of Krishna and Arjuna sitting in one car and passing through the battle of Samsara is based upon the Vedic imagery of Indra and Kutsa (son of Arjuni) both seated on one car and passing through the struggle of Samsara to Heaven. There is indeed such a strong resemblance between these two concepts found in the Veda and Gita, that we can unhesitatingly say that the Gita concept was taken from the Vedic allegory and only amplified and altered a little to suit the Mahabharata story. And Aurobindo Ghosh has not failed to notice this fact in his *Essays on Gita*. We give his remarks here in his own words : " In the Veda also we have this image of the human soul and the Divine riding in one chariot through a great battle to the goal of a high-aspiring effort. But there it is a pure figure and symbol. The Divine is there Indra, the Master of the World of Light and Immortality, the power of divine knowledge which descends to the aid of the human seeker battling with the sons of falsehood, darkness, limitation, mortality ; the battle is with spiritual enemies who bar the way to the higher world of our being ; and the goal is that plane of vast being resplendent with the light of the supreme Truth and uplifted to the conscious immortality of the perfected soul, of which Indra is the

master. The human soul is Kutsa, he who constantly seeks the seer-knowledge, as his name implies, and he is the son of Arjuna or Arjuni, the White One, child of Switra, the White Mother; he is, that is to say, the Satvic or purified and light-filled soul which is open to the unbroken glories of the divine knowledge. And when the chariot reaches the end of its journey, the own home of Indra, the human Kutsa has grown into such an exact likeness of his divine companion that he can only be distinguished by Shachi, the wife of Indra, because she is 'truth conscious.' The parable is evidently of the inner life of man; it is a figure of the human growing into the likeness of the eternal divine by the increasing illumination of knowledge. But the Gita starts from action and Arjuna is the man of action and not of knowledge, the fighter, never the seer or the thinker." (Essays on the Gita 1st Series, pp. 28, 29). It is perfectly true that Kutsa was a Rishi (seer) and Arjuna of the Gita was not a Rishi; but with this slight difference, in the rest of the allegoric figure employed both in the Veda and in the Gita the resemblance is so close and remarkable that it leaves no doubt that the Gita has taken it from Veda. Kutsa was also a fighter like Arjuna and a man of action as much as Arjuna, although the latter was not a Rishi like Kutsa.

Nor is this all. For we have, besides this close similarity, another very close parallel between the Krishna-Arjuna dialogue of the Gita and the Krishna-Arjuna figures of the Rig Veda. It is well known how in the Veda by the names Krishna-Arjuna, Night and Day are referred to in as figurative a way as the Krishna-

Arjuna of the Gita figure in that spiritual poem. "Ahah Krishnam" (Black Day is the Night), and "Ahah Arjunam" (White Day) is the Day proper. Now in this world the purpose served by the phenomena of Night following Day and Day following Night is exactly the theme revealed both in the Veda and the Gita. Krishna of the Gita is to Arjuna of the Gita just what Night (Krishna of the Veda) is to the Day (Arjuna of the Veda). In the economy of Nature, light performs the very same work that Krishna performs in the Gita to aid, encourage, inspire, recuperate and revive the languishing Soul of Arjuna (Day). How many difficult problems the Night has solved for us? How many hints it has given us? How many cures it has effected? How many instructions it has offered us? All of us can know from our own experience. Thus in this vast struggle for existence, the Night does exactly act the part of Krishna in Gita to the care-worn, languishing souls (Arjuna of the Gita). Nay, more than this, Night, darkest Night (Krishna), has given birth to such sciences as astronomy. Thus we see that Night, Darkness, Evil, Distress—all these are the great Teachers (*i.e.*, Krishna) of humanity (Arjuna). If we take stock of our knowledge, we shall have to come to the conclusion that we learnt more wisdom from the folly of others and of ourselves than from the wisdom of others and of ourselves. Thus folly around us has been a greater Teacher than Wisdom itself. Similar is the case with tragic events. "Dvandvamayo'ayam samsarah"—our world, as it is constituted, exists because of these *dvandvas* (pairs) of light-darkness, pleasure-pain, love-

hate, wisdom-folly, etc., which may be called the Arjuna-Krishnas of the Veda and the Gita as well. Our world is subject to the Rhythmic Cyclic or Periodic law of harmony, comprising of alternating periods of growth and decay, evolution and dissolution, day and night, light and darkness, say the Veda and the Gita.

Another point on which a spiritual interpretation of the Gita story is possible is this : The three brothers—blind Dhritarashtra, pale Pandu, and sage Vidura—do obviously represent the three Gunas, Tamas, Rajas and Sattva of the Sankhyas. And the great war takes place in the reign of blind Dhritarashtra, *i.e.*, when Tamas reigns supreme over the minds and hearts of men, as the name Dhritarashtra (one who holds the kingdom under his sway) itself beautifully suggests. The many sons of Tamas (dark wicked passions due to folly and perversion) engage in mortal fight with the few sons of pale Pandu (Rajoguna) in all the affairs of men in this world. The Kauravas represent the baser passions while the Pandavas represent the higher passions that sway the heart of humanity. And in such a mighty struggle as this where the lower and darker nature of humanity (the Kauravas) want to vanquish the higher and nobler nature (the Pandavas), Krishna representing Reason, Conscience, the Divine Voice or the Revelation comes to the aid of the higher and nobler qualities (Pandavas) to subdue the baser ones and re-

instate the nobler ones in the heart of humanity on the whole. This is the spiritual meaning of that spiritual poem, the Gita.

And how do we arrive at this spiritual interpretation ? From the meanings of words used in that poem itself, such as, Dharma Kshetra, Kurukshetra, Krishna, Govinda, Hrisheeksha, Arjuna, Gudhakesha, Dhritarashtra, Mamaka, Pandava, etc. Krishna means one who draws, absorbs, and attracts and hence stands for Reason, Conscience, etc. ; Govinda means the wise ; Hrisheeksha, the master or ruler of the senses ; Pandava and Arjuna we have already explained ; Gudhakesha means the alert, watchful and conscientious one, *i.e.*, Arjuna. Dharmakshetra and Kurukshetra, meaning the Field fit for the performance of one's duty, represent the world and the human body or environment. From these few but most significant terms we can say that the Gita is a beautiful allegorical and spiritual poem embodying most helpful advice offered by Reason, Conscience and Revelation (Krishna) to the struggling, languishing human soul (Arjuna) on the momentous occasion of every great struggle that takes place between the many baser (Kaurava) and the few nobler (Pandava) propensities, passions, and feelings that are liable to sway the human heart especially when the dark, evil and blind forces of Tamoguna (Dhritarashtra) prevail over wide areas of humanity.

# TEACHINGS OF FRAY FRANCISCO DE OSUNA

*By Wolfram H. Koch*

[Mr. Koch is of German nationality. He is a staunch supporter of the Vedanta movement in Europe. India has known much about Christianity as preached by the different churches, but little of it as lived and interpreted by its great mystics. The teachings of Francisco de Osuna, as presented by Mr. Koch, only goes to prove the great Vedantic truth that all religions in their essence teach the same God and the same spiritual ideal. This mystic lived somewhere about 1540. The teachings set forth here are taken from his Third Spiritual Alphabet.]

**V**ERY little is known of the Spanish mystic who is the subject of this essay. Like all other mystics of Spain he is not so much given to speculation or philosophy, to abstract thinking and fine theoretical distinctions, as to explaining the practical ways and means of reaching union or communion with the Divine through purification, solitude and contemplation. So his writings abound in practical hints and suggestions regarding the ways and laws of spiritual practice as well as the preliminary conditions to be fulfilled by the earnest seeker. The value of his writings is greatly enhanced by the fact that he does not belong to that class of theological writers who only refer to the spiritual experiences of others; for he had followed the path himself and come to know both its pitfalls and its glories. In all his writings he wishes to be of practical help to those who sincerely long for the higher life, be they beginners or persons already well on their way to the goal. His fundamental teachings and ideas, which are stressed again and again, are perseverance, purity, solitude, contemplation and, above all, true renunciation of all love for the created as such and of all worldly thoughts. To express this in his own words, "We must make ourselves blind, deaf and dumb to all

that is not God." Human relationships and loves pass away like a flash of lightning making the darkness appear all the more dark, and they often leave behind a deep scar in the soul. A man who continually thinks of them allows his real being to get swallowed up in momentary desires and thoughts of fleeting objective possessions, thus losing the sense of what is eternal in him and steeping his soul in deeper and deeper ignorance.

But of those souls, in whom the knowledge of this truth has already dawned, Sri Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita :

"To those who are constantly in My service and who meditate on Me and Me alone, I carry what they lack and preserve what they already have."

And it is to their fellowship that all great mystics, be they of the East or of the West, belong. So none of the deeper truths they tried to proclaim in their teachings can have lost all value for the human soul even in these modern days of ours, if they are approached reverently and sincerely by the seeker. That is why, it is greatly to be regretted, that Fray Francisco de Osuna's writings do not find the attention they deserve, neither in Spain nor elsewhere, although there is much that could be of great profit

and use to the earnest aspirant, even to-day ; for the laws of spiritual life are ever the same. Unfortunately the following quotations cannot give a full idea of the nature and trend of Osuna's instructions, just as a few stones taken here and there from a beautiful Gothic cathedral cannot give a true picture of the cathedral itself. At the best, such passages are only sparks coming from the blazing and inextinguishable fire of the Divine dwelling in the hearts of His greatest lovers, but even then some of them might kindle other fires which in their turn would send living sparks of Divine Knowledge and Love into the present-day world, devoured as it is by the canker of ruthlessness and of collective and individual egoism and greed.

The fire of Divine Love destroys, it is true, but at the same time it lays new and better foundations upon which nobler and surer ways of life can be built. The man writhing in the clutches of his own lust and greed, of what Sri Ramakrishna used to call 'Kamini-Kanchana,' he who has become the bond-slave of his senses and their ceaseless clamourings, must be annihilated and become ashes in its flames to give birth to that deified man, the temple of the Eternal, of whom Clement of Alexandria says :—

"The man in whom lives the Word does not change, does not transform himself, has the form of the Word, is similar to God, is beautiful, does not adorn himself, is True Beauty, for he is God, becomes God, because he wishes what God wishes."

May these scattered sparks serve as beacon lights to the soul seeking its way out of the darkness of worldly conceptions and pursuits.

#### THE PRACTICE OF RECOLLECTION AND CONTEMPLATION

"In the beginning contemplation as a path is narrow, but with perseverance it becomes wider and wider, until the soul as the spouse of the Lord desires to see Him at mid-day which is the very ardour and perfection of love."

"If out of love thou canst not persevere in the practice of contemplation, force thyself with holy zeal to enter through the narrow door of recollection, for God gives him the grace of power who has courage to persevere. I urgently advise thee to put away from thee all things which impede thee, for then thou canst persevere with greater calmness. Do not be less careful in praying than thou art in sleeping. If thou makest all noise and occupation to cease in order to sleep, shutting thyself in and remaining alone, losing all the cares of the world, thou shouldst do the same in order to pray, turning wholly to spiritual things. Think that God did not create thee for anything else but to pray, nor does He ask of thee any other thing except that thou pray to Him in spirit and in truth, because thus the wish to do this thy duty will become vivified, and thou shalt become a master therein."

"Although the principle of knowing God dwells in our soul, we know that through sin this principle became feeble and covered up when our first parents opened their eyes, thereby losing the holy blindness they possessed more than can be expressed in words before sin came to us. Sin brought in its wake that greatest of evils : to investigate human affairs, to know what is not good for us to know. This desire to know may not in itself be evil, but

it often becomes so as it impedes our prayer and the contemplation of the high and spiritual things of God, the oppressed desire for which lies so lifeless and neglected in our soul that the Lord must needs help with His grace to revive this secret spark which is in our heart, for without His very special favour we cannot even realise our own blindness."

"Thou must be spiritually deaf, for, owing to his listening to the voice of his wife, the first man, as the Lord saith, created great troubles for himself. Our wife is our sensuality whom our reason must not listen to or try to understand in any way, and this the commandment given to Abraham to listen to the voice of Sarah does not contradict, for it came to him after the things of women in her had ceased to be, as say the Scriptures. And these cease to be in our sensuality when it is well subjected to our reason, and when this is done, we have to send out the slave and her child, driving away the imagination and distraction which arise from them, so that we may remain alone without the clamourings and voices which deafen our soul like a mill that does not stop making hurtful noise for those living in it. And this must be absent in the house of God when it is being built, where no hammering nor sawing nor any sound of iron must be heard, because all these sounds are hoarse and do not please the soul, but give it great trouble."

"He who rises to the summits of contemplation where he is more acted upon than acting and more moved than moving, does not make use of the knowledge and attainments which were the eyes with which his soul knew things. For high contemplation is near the Divinity which cannot be

known through our senses, not even with the help of the spiritual senses of the soul that is still united with this mortal body ; for the soul cannot have any knowledge which has not before been in the physical senses ; and as our Lord is Pure Spirit, it follows that He cannot be known through the spiritual senses of the soul that is still shut up in the prison-house of the flesh, through which it is forced to understand all it understands with the help of the connecting link that exists between the flesh and the spirit. The miserable soul that is still joined to the flesh cannot operate in its contemplation as detached as it can when free, which is shown in Elias who after having climbed the mountain of God, which is contemplation, covered his face with a cloak so as not to see God Who descended on the mountain to comfort him. The holy sage knew well that with his physical eyes he could not behold the invisible Lord, so he wished to make himself blind by covering his physical eyes with a cloak to show that the knowledge and light he possessed at that time did not reach further than the cloak, which is the Humanity of God."

"In order to dedicate oneself to the prayer of which this Third Alphabet treats, it is very essential to gird about and to constrain and to imprison the heart and to make for it a cage of perpetual silence in which to shut it up so as to avoid its vagaries according to what the sage says : 'Guard thy heart with every care, for from it proceeds life'."

"Those who desire to attain to the highest and purest contemplation must needs leave the creatures and the created and even the Holy Humanity so as to rise higher and to receive the

communion of purely spiritual things in greater completeness, according to which St. Cyprian says : 'The fullness of the Spiritual Presence could not enter while the corporal one of Christ was still there'."

"He who desires to follow the practice of recollection must refrain not only from all sins as from impurities, but also from all and every human love and the comfort he might legally get from them. And he must also refrain from thought, for, according to what St. Paul says, 'He who practises wrestling, refrains from all things, and he who desires to wrestle with himself, must do so all the more, refraining from all thought that might intoxicate his heart or take away all feeling and inner attention, and moreover, he must refrain from all that carries some evil in itself'."

#### THE PRACTICE OF DETACHMENT AND DISSAPION

"Leaving all creatures with a "no" we unite ourselves with their Lord with a quick movement, as if we were running to be taken up in the arms of the Lord who holds them wide open to receive us. With this union Moses joined himself to the extremity of the mountain of contemplation where he was waiting for God to speak to him."

"We must lift ourselves up from created things to those uncreated, and in them praise the Lord in that night which is the privation of human knowledge, so that we may say : 'Night is my illumination in my delights.' And we have to put away from our heart all created thought, just as water flows away without anything remaining of it, so that it may become one with the Divine fluid and the living water of the grace of the Lord. This emptying of the heart is very much the

opposite to that in the hearts of the evil-minded which, according to what the sage says, are broken vessels that cannot contain Wisdom."

"Also the apostle asks us to clear the heart and empty it of all that is created, saying : 'The peace of God which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.' And then does the peace of God which passeth all understanding keep our hearts and minds when the quietude of the Lord raises us above all the bodily senses to higher things, and when our heart ceases to think of all that is created, and our mind is occupied with God alone, not admitting or giving room to anything that is smaller. Then the heart is truly guarded with all care for God alone who comes in silence out of it as the waters of Shiloah that go softly and for despising which the people are much reprehended."

"Thou wouldst be greatly confused if thou considerst a palm-tree which, even when planted in dry ground, never gives up its verdure either in the blazing sun or in great cold, whereas thou, on the smallest occasion, stoppest and swoonest away; every small difficulty, every small temptation, every small adversity, upsets thee, although even a dog perseveres in seeking its quarry among the thorns, and when it cannot catch it because of its being well shut in on all sides, it still continues in its efforts and stays there barking so that people may come to its help as it desires to give a perfect ending to what it has begun."

"Wisdom, which is the sweet taste of heavenly things attained through experience, is better received when the heart is empty of all things; and not only do the outer works cease,

but also the inner ones, putting away one's own action regarding creatures, so as to be fully occupied with the action of the Holy Ghost.

"All creatures are but insignificant things compared with Him who created them. So St. Paul says that when that which is perfect came—which is the contemplation of the Divine—he ejected that which was imperfect and which belonged to little minds, being the contemplation of the creatures, so as to give himself with his completely emptied heart to the Lord Who desires it whole."

"The Christian, according to Christ's saying, 'God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth,' should possess perfect recollection and separate himself from all other creatures."

"As the life of man must not be directed towards anything else except to seek God out of whom we come only to go back to Him, it is necessary to listen attentively to the commandment which Christ imposes on all men, saying, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.'"

"When princes and great kings come to stay in a house, the whole house is immediately cleared, and only the empty shell of it remains, because the king brings with him all that is needed for his service and for the furnishing of the house. He only desires it to be cleansed from all dirt; so our letter says that thou shouldst

clear thy heart of all vice and of all human impediments, and empty it of all that is created, for the less company there be, the better can God find room in it. The emptier our heart be of all created things, the better will it be prepared for Him. A vessel held by a trembling hand cannot be quite full without something being spilt. Thus our heart cannot be full of the Lord while a thought that trembles and knows no rest possesses it."

"Just as a vacuum attracts something to fill it, the heart that is emptied of all that is worldly attracts God, so that He may occupy it and fill its void."

"Putting aside all cares and anxieties, hold the Holy Name of God in thy memory all the time that thou canst do so and yearn for Him alone."

"It was not necessary for Christ, but it was for us that He went to pray in the desert for forty days, so that He might induce us to follow Him—I do not say for forty days, but forty years—through the desert of Divine contemplation, purified of all that is created."

"The sage asks us to free the heart, and it should be freed in such a way that it is emptied of all that is created, so that the Lord alone may dwell in it. And this saying is conformable to what St. Anselm says, 'Remain empty for God and rest from work in Him; enter into the retreat of thy soul, after having ejected all other things and only left God in it.'"





# MYSTICISM IN INDIAN POETRY

*By Swami Vividishananda*

[Swami Vividishananda is the head of the Vedanta Society, Washington, U.S.A. His brief exposition of the mystical element in Indian poetry, with profuse quotations from original sources, gives us vivid glimpses of the spiritual aspirations of the Indian soul.]

**I**N India it is religion that has supplied the stimulus for artistic creation. Every religious upheaval in Indian history has shown a marked progress in the different artistic fields. Poetry has therefore been a handmaiden of religion in India. Indian poetry has been pre-eminently mystical in character.

Sanskrit may be said to be the mother of most Indian languages, and Sanskrit poetry, especially of the mystical type, draws its inspiration from the Vedas, the most ancient and richest literature of the Indo-Aryans. In the Upanishads, the philosophical portion of the Vedas, we find the culmination of mystical thought and vision.

The Vedic sages looked at the wonderful panorama of the universe and were filled with awe and admiration. Natural phenomena which were most striking were deified and made into symbols for the realisation of the Highest. In this way, the sun, the moon, the thunder, the dawn, and other phenomena of nature were symbolised. We shall quote here a stanza of a Vedic hymn addressed to Dawn :

"Thou art the life of all that lives,  
The breath of all that breathes ;  
the sight  
Of thee makes every countenance  
bright,  
New strength to every spirit gives.  
The deification of natural pheno-

mena marks the beginning of mystical thought in Indian literature. Later on the sages, not satisfied with looking outward in their quest for Truth, went inward and discovered the Self—the Reality which is identical with Absolute Existence, Knowledge and Bliss.

Says Svetasvatara Upanishad :

"As oil in sesame seeds, as butter in cream,

As water in river-beds, and as fire  
in the friction-sticks,

So is the Self apprehended in one's  
own soul,

If one looks for it with true austerity."

The Self is beyond speech and thought—beyond the ken of sense perception. It is neither personal nor impersonal—something where all contradictions meet. It is immanent and transcendent at the same time. It is above knowledge and yet it is the most known.

Says Kena Upanishad : "There goes neither the eye, nor speech, nor mind. We know it not. Nor do we see how to teach one about it. Different it is from all that are known and is beyond the unknown as well."

Says Katha Upanishad : "The Self, smaller than the smallest and greater than the greatest, dwells in the heart of creatures. The desireless one, being free from grief, realises its glory through the purity of senses and mind. Though sitting still, the Self

travels far ; though lying down it goes everywhere. Who can know besides me that effulgent Reality which rejoices and rejoices not ?

"The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars, nor these lightnings, and much less this mortal fire. When the Self shines, everything else shines after it. By its light all these are lighted."

Because of the limitations of the human senses and understanding, the sages have described the Self in terms of negation, saying : "It is not this, it is not that." The Self is not, however, an abstraction or a non-entity. It is the most concrete of all concrete things. In it we live, move and have our being.

Says Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad :

"Lo, verily, not for love of the husband is a husband dear,

But for love of the Self a husband is dear.

Lo, verily, not for love of the wife is a wife dear,

But for love of the Self a wife is dear.

Lo, verily, not for love of the sons are sons dear,

But for love of the Self sons are dear.

Lo, verily, not for love of the wealth is wealth dear,

But for love of the Self wealth is dear."

Here we get a glimpse into the nature of the Self which is the essence of everything. This knowledge of the Self is an experience that passeth all understanding, and from time immemorial it has been variously described in religious literature and poetry as ecstasy, beatific vision, God-realisation, Nirvana or Samadhi. As it concerns itself with an Entity which has been the riddle of

all riddles, it has ever been associated with mystery. It is a state of consciousness vouchsafed to a few, considered and worshipped by humanity as the salt of the earth. And yet it is not the monopoly of those blessed few, for every man can rise to that state of consciousness, provided he is willing to pay the required price. A man with a purified and disciplined mind is bound to have this experience, which is the fulfillment of all experiences.

Describing the glory of Self-realisation, which is the *summum bonum* of life, say the Upanishads :

"By knowing the Self, which is at once the high and the low, the knots of the heart are cut asunder, doubts vanish, and the results of actions past and present are destroyed." "The Self is Bliss itself, by knowing the Self one becomes supremely blessed."

We shall now pass on to a consideration of devotional mysticism in Indian poetry as distinguished from philosophical mysticism of the Vedas and the Upanishads which we have been discussing. The ideal of devotional mysticism is God, who is the embodiment of perfection, knowledge, bliss, truth, justice and kindness. In Sanskrit literature and the other different languages of India we find glowing descriptions of this devotional mysticism.

The aspirant ascribes to God the various human relationships and tries to realise Him through love and devotion. He starts with admiration. Admiration intensified grows into longing and when there is passionate longing, the feeling of separation is very keen. The devotee is restless and disconsolate until he has the union.

The passionate yearning of the devotee and the restlessness of his heart are beautifully portrayed by Mirabai, a woman poet-mystic, writing in Hindi, in the following poem :

"I am thirsting for Your love, my Beloved !

I shall make this body a lamp, and my tender heart shall be its wick ;

I shall fill it with the scented oil of my young love and burn it night and day at Your shrine, O Beloved !

For Your love I shall sacrifice all the wealth of my youth ;

Your name shall be the crown of my head.

I am longing for You, O my Lord : for the season of the swing has come ; but You are not beside me.

Clouds gather on my brows and my eyes shed heavy showers.

My parents gave me to You, I have become Yours for ever ; who but You can be my Lord ?

This separation troubles my heart ; make me Your own ; make me perfect like You, O Lord of Perfection ! "

—*The Temple Bells.*

God is no longer an abstract entity but a flesh and blood reality, very close and dear to us. He is our father and mother, our friend and beloved, constantly drawing us to Him. Vidyapati, a mystic Maithili poet of the fourteenth century, brings out this idea in his own inimitable way :

"Under the shade of the tree of life the flute of Love is sounding.

Awaken, my soul, He calleth for you. Hasten to meet Him, with eager expectation He waiteth for you.

He, at each tread of whose feet blooms a lotus ; at each movement of whose limbs flashes a lightning :

He, whose smile spreads perfume in the air, and makes the festival of spring :

He is calling for you, O my Soul ! Then why this dallying ? Hasten to meet Him, to fall before Him in worship ; to leave in His bosom the weight of your care.

The flute of the Lord is sounding a melody of Love : under the tree of mercy He waiteth for you, O my soul ! "

—*The Temple Bells.*

Indian poetry has been enormously enriched by the contributions of Rabindranath Tagore, a modern Bengali poet, who has been to Europe and America more than once. People of the West are already familiar with his writings through translation. The popularity of Rabindranath is due to his universal human appeal. We shall quote here a poem from his Gitanjali—"An Offering of Songs," which won for him the Nobel Prize :

"Life of my life, I shall ever try to keep my body pure, knowing that Thy living touch is upon all my limbs.

I shall ever try to keep all untruths out from my thoughts, knowing that Thou art that truth which has kindled the light of reason in my mind.

I shall ever try to drive all evils away from my heart and keep my love in flower, knowing that Thou hast Thy seat in the inmost shrine of my heart.

And it shall be my endeavour to reveal Thee in my actions, know-

ing it is Thy power that gives me strength to act."

We shall close this essay by quoting from Kabir, a mystic poet of a high order, who describes, with the wealth of Oriental imagery, the supreme joy of God-realisation as the coming of an honoured guest in the house :

"I would caress this day ! It is dearer to me than all other ; for my beloved is a guest in my house to-day.

My chamber is radiant with His presence ; my courtyard is blessed.

Lost in admiring His great beauty, my longings sing His name and are glad !

I wash His feet with my tears, I gaze into His face ; I offer my body and soul, and all I have, to my Lord.

My Beloved, my Treasure has honoured my house. What a day of joy is this !

At the sight of my Lord all evils flee from me, and my heart feels the buoyancy of delight.

Yes, to-day my Beloved is a Guest in my house ; and this day is dearer to me above all others."

—*The Temple Bells.*

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**The Essentials of Advaitism :** By *Rasvihari Das, M.A., Ph.D.* Published by the Punjab Sanskrit Book Depot, Saidmitha, Lahore. Pages 146.

This book is an English translation of Sureswara's *Naishkarmyasiddhi* without the original text. We have no hesitation in saying that the author has executed his task in a way best suited to the needs of modern non-Sanskrit-knowing students of philosophy. Rendering of Sanskrit philosophical works into English is always a difficult task often due to lack of equivalent English terminology—many of the ideas of Hindu philosophies being new to the English-speaking race—and secondly the arguments, often put in a nutshell in the original, would sometimes convey no meaning, or if at all, only a vague idea of them to the English readers. In both these respects Prof. Das's translation of *Naishkarmyasiddhi* is free from the defects that a too literal translation would have involved. Explanatory notes would interfere with the natural flow of thoughts. We fully agree with the author in his defence of his method. "Nothing would be gained by saying at first something unintelligible and then trying to make it intelligible." He has also avoided too close repetitions in which the original abounds. What

he has attempted is "to give a running account of the book, sometimes elaborating and sometimes abbreviating what is actually said in the text. The translator has given assurance that "no argument of any significance has been left out and none has been added which in substance is not found in the original text or its commentary." Dr. Das has been quite successful in the task of making his author easily intelligible to the readers of the day in language which is lucid, chaste, accurate and free from archaic or modern technicalities. On the whole the translation is pleasant reading and will be hailed with joy by all lovers of philosophy.

The book is provided with a fine introduction setting forth the general trend of Advaita philosophy, and summarising the arguments and conclusions of the book. These have been discussed threadbare through centuries and call for no discussion in a brief review. The first chapter dealing with the inadequacy of Vedie Karma Kanda for liberation has lost a good deal of its importance for modern minds though it has so much by implication which serve as a criticism of the modern gospels of "work" and "success." The third chapter removes all possible misconceptions about the meaning of the Vedic revelation declaring the identity of the self with the

absolute. The nature of ignorance is dealt with in this and in the concluding chapters. The treatment of this topic is inadequate. The book is predominantly rationalistic in its outlook and must appeal to all rationalists.

**Creed of The Dauntless :** *By Frank B. Whitney. Published by Messrs. L. N. Fowler & Co., 7, Imperial Arcade, Ludgate Circus, E.C. 4, London.*

The author has vindicated the idea of the book in these terms : "A presentation of constructive thought and principles for those who would be undaunted, unaffected by adverse beliefs or by external things, victorious in the realisation of their innate power to overcome." The book has been dedicated to the reader who at this moment is beginning to affirm the credo of the overcomer. This credo has been set out on page 11 of the book. Various topics have been dealt with under four main heads : (1) Living Victoriously, (2) Relaxation and Prayer, (3) Health and Demonstration, and (4) Smiles and Happiness. These cover a wide ground and provide ample materials to thought and fruitful experiment to those who are eager to tread the path and live a purposeful life. Many things perplex and bewilder the average man and woman in these days. Owing to the speed at which life is lived, no time is spent on thought or study of a useful character. Under these circumstances a book of this kind is bound to be of immense help.

To those who are familiar with the teaching of Vedānta—the moment one begins to realise he is of the Atman or is potentially divine, his upward climbing to the supreme heights is assured. That very thought fills him with courage and enables him to march towards his goal undaunted by inner or outer obstacles. The thought developed in this book is somewhat of this kind, (but from the Christian standpoint)—both in the exposition and in its implications. The portions of the book dealing with the following subjects will be found very helpful : "Conscious of no Limitation," "Relaxation," "Detachment," "From Prayer to Demonstration," "Into

the Silence, into Health" and "Smiling at Life."

**The Inner Man and other Lectures on Aryan Philosophy :** *Published by Pandit K. Gani, Arya Samaj, Madras. Price 6 as.*

In the brochure before us are included three lectures which are intended to be authentic exposition of the teachings of Swami Dayananda Saraswathi. Of these, the first lecture entitled 'The inner man and the inner world' or "the subtle forces of Nature" by Sjt. Ganga Prasad, M.A., F.R.A.S., Chief Judge, Tehri Garhwal State, deals with the pilgrimage of the soul from the Annamaya Kosha to the Anandamaya Kosha. The second lecture on "Sri Krishna" by Pandit Champupati, M.A., might probably be passable as a piece of historical research but we doubt whether it could be accepted as an article of belief by the orthodox people. The third lecture by Pandit Ganga Prasad Upadhyaya, M.A., is a brief discussion of the relation between mind and matter, and makes out a place for realism in philosophy. The book is on the whole useful and instructive.

**Tragedies of Modernism :** *By Nagendranath Choudhury. Published by A. K. Choudhury, 10-B, Kanai Dhar Lane, Calcutta.*

Mr. Choudhury's enthusiastic book written in the spirit of journalism has clearly exposed the perversion, lechery, crime, fraud, and lawlessness submerged under the pretentiously placid surface of the present political and social systems of the New World. The book deserves circulation in America as well as in India. In America to-day interested agencies are secretly lavishing enormous sums for persistently misinterpreting India to those who are easily carried away by such propaganda ; this work would at least faintly suggest that India is not unaware of the black spots of America. But it may be hoped that the book shall prove more serviceable in opening the eyes of our own rising generation influenced by western ideas, nurtured as they are in an atmosphere of sensational distraction purveyed by the prolific letterpress, amorous cinemas, exhibitionistic dramas and pronographic literature assailing the very moral being with a hundred stimulii that debase the value of human life.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Centenary Celebrations at Colombo

The citizens of Colombo celebrated the Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna with great eclat. The programme of the celebration among other items, included special Puja, Homa, and devotional music. The first sitting of the Convention of Religions held under the Chairmanship of Mr. Justice T. A. Akbar was undoubtedly the most outstanding function in which votaries of different faiths spoke on the sublime teachings of their prophets. Swami Avinashananda, at the very outset, gave a picturesque survey of the achievements of different people in the domain of spirituality and made a passing reference to the immense significance of the Centenary Movement.

Distinguished speakers like Bhikku Narada, Rev. Ivan S. Corea, Mr. H. Ototsu, Mr. H. M. Desai and Mr. N. K. Choksi represented Buddhism, Christianity, Shintoism, Jainism and Zoroastrianism respectively. The president in winding up the interesting discussion of the day incidentally paid a high encomium to the selfless services of the Ramakrishna Mission and opined that a real spiritual outlook can alone strike a death-knell to all squabbles that are proving a serious menace to world-peace.

The following day the conspectus of faiths had its second sitting under the presidency of Swami Avinashananda in which Prof. C. Suntharalingam, Mr. T. B. Jayah, Mr. S. Lillaram and Dr. T. Nalainatham spoke on Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Theosophy respectively. Swami Asangananda spoke a few words on Sri Ramakrishna and the Harmony of Religions. There was also a ladies' meeting.

### Sri Ramakrishna Centenary in Gujarat

**Ahmedabad :** In connection with the Centenary Celebrations, a conference of religions was held on the 16th August with Mr. Ananda Shankar Dhruva, Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Benares Hindu University in the chair. Representatives of all religions were invited. A public meeting was held under the presidency of Mandanwar Jayendra Puriji when speeches

were delivered on the life of the Great Master, Sri Ramakrishna. The President observed that after Sri Shankaracharya there has not appeared another god-man like Sri Ramakrishna. Lady Vidyagowri, the first lady graduate of Gujarat, presided over the ladies' meeting. Great enthusiasm prevailed.

**Baroda :** Centenary was celebrated on a grand scale by the Baroda public. The ruler of the State being the President of the World Fellowship of Faiths, citizens of Baroda took special interest in the convention of religions held here. More than two thousand persons assembled in the spacious hall of Nyaya Mandir. Mr. Satyavrata Mukerji, Sir Suba of the Baroda State, presided over the meeting held on the occasion and delivered an instructive lecture, describing the position of Sri Ramakrishna amongst the religious teachers who have appeared since the Vedic age.

**Surat :** Mr. A. K. Trivadi, Professor of philosophy in the Baroda College, presided, and more than half a dozen speakers spoke on the mission of Sri Ramakrishna. Here also a conference of religions was held. Mrs. Trivedi, an Oxford Graduate, presided over the Ladies' meeting.

**Broach :** Dewan Bahadur Ambashanker presided at the Bharucha Hall and the leading citizens paid glowing tribute to Sri Ramakrishna who saved Sanatana Dharma in a crisis. Mandaleshwar Murlidharanandji spoke at length on the wonderful harmony of Jnan and Bhakti in the Master's life. Here also a ladies' meeting was held.

**Cambay :** During the devastating floods in Gujarat in 1927, Swami Sambudhananda with a number of Mission workers carried on relief work here. The people of this State enthusiastically celebrated the Centenary. Dewan Bahadur K. K. Thakore presided.

**Nadiad :** This is the birth place of Haridas Viharidas Desai, Dewan of Junagad, who introduced Swami Vivekanandji to the Rulers and Dewans of many states of Western India. Many literati too of Gujarat were born here. Sri Swamiji had visited the place during his itinerant life.

The students and the public held two separate meetings.

*Navsari* : This is the oldest settlement of the Parsees in Western India as well as the birth place of Dadabhai Navróji, Jamshedji Tata, Comrade Saklatvala and other famous men. Here the Parsees and the Hindus joined hands in celebrating the Centenary.

Swami Vishwananda, President, Bombay Ramakrishna Ashrama, attended all these functions and delivered series of lectures.

#### Centenary News in brief

The Parliament of religious connected with the Centenary Celebrations will be held in the Town Hall of Calcutta from the 1st to 7th of March 1937. About 500 letters of invitation have already been issued to outstanding personages all the world over, interested in the establishment of a world-culture and international fellowship of faiths. Many of them have appreciated the move highly and sent their greetings and good wishes while some have promised to participate in the parliament by sending their literary contributions. The names of Dr. Von Schmid, Professor of Sociology in the University of Leiden, Prof. Dr. Franklin Edgerton, Professor of Sanskrit and Professor Richard C. Thurnwald of Yale University, Mr. Alexander Farquharson, Institute of Sociology, London, Fr. Agostino Gemelli, O.F.M., Rector of the Catholic University, Milan, Prof. Dr. John Plenge of Germany, Prof. E. Lively of the Ohio, State University, Prof. A. Niceforo the celebrated sociologist of Rome, Alex. Emmanuel of Toulouse, Prof. A. Dopach, University of Vienna and also of the Austrian Commission for Intellectual Co-operation, Mr. A. Johnson, Editor, *Social Research*, New York, Dr. T. P. Sevensma, Librarian of the League of Nations, Dr. Baron V. Brockdorff of Kiel University, Prof. Louis Renou, the distinguished Indologist, Dr. T. H. Lee of the Fuh Tan University, Shanghai and Prof. Winternitz of the Prague University may be mentioned among the persons who have already responded to the invitation.

Prof. Dr. Karl Hanshofer, President of the Dutch Academy, Munich, Germany, and Prof. J. W. Hauser of the University of Tübingen have already informed that they

have been delivering lectures on Sri Ramakrishna and India and her religious movements respectively in fulfilment of the objects of the Ramakrishna Centenary Movement. Pandit Tarachand Ray, M.A., also spoke on the life and work of Sri Ramakrishna to an appreciative audience in the premises of the Indian Students' Association in Berlin and the speech was reported in *Berliner Boersen-Zeitung*.

The Centenary Celebrations at the Ashram at Buenos Aires came off with great eclat. Dr. Kalidas Nag, Madame Sophia Wadia and Swami Vijayananda addressed the public meeting. In San Francisco, Swami Asokananda gave several discourses on the Master's divine life and teachings. In this connection an extensive publicity campaign was also carried on to propagate the Master's soul-stirring message. Puja, chant, prayer, discourses and concert created a spiritual atmosphere which inspired all. The Swami addressed a meeting in Oakland also.

#### Flood & Famine Relief

Swami Madhavananda of Ramakrishna Mission has issued the following :—

Reports from our various centres in the famine-stricken areas of Bengal show that distress is still extremely acute. Recently we have greatly increased our relief measures to meet the situation. During the first week of October the Mission has helped 7,933 men and women from the different centres with 381 mds. 6 srs. of rice, besides old and new cloths.

The flood relief work in Malda has been closed, but that in Arakan is continuing. In famine areas of Bengal the Mission is spending about Rs. 1,200 per week at present.

The work will have to be continued for some weeks more in most of the above areas, particularly in the Khulna district, till the harvest brings in better conditions.

Our funds have been almost exhausted, but the situation is still very grave and thousands need help to be saved from starvation and death. We therefore appeal again to the generous public to contribute to our funds. Contributions will be thankfully received and acknowledged at the following address :—The President, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O., Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

आत्मनानर्थयुक्तेन पापे निविशते मनः । स्वकर्म कलुषं कृत्वा दुःखे महति धीयते ॥  
उत्सवादुत्सवं यान्ति स्वर्गात् स्वर्गे सुखात्सुखं । श्रद्धान्ध्र दान्ताश्च सत्वस्याः शुभकरिणः ॥  
पुलाका इव धान्येषु पुस्तिका इव पक्षिषु । तद्विधास्ते मनुष्येषु येषां धर्मो न कारणम् ॥  
सुशीघ्रमपि धावन्तं विधानमनुधावति । रोते सह शयानेन येन येन यथा कृतम् ॥  
अचोद्यमानानि यथा पुष्पाणि च फलानि च । स्वकालं नातिवर्तन्ते तथा कर्म पुरा कृतम् ॥  
आत्मना विहितं दुःखमात्मना विहितं सुखं । गर्भशय्यामुपादाय भुज्यते पौर्वदेहिकम् ॥  
यथा घेनुसहस्रेषु वत्सो विन्दति मातरं । तथापूर्वकृतं कर्म कर्तारमनुगच्छति ॥  
संक्लिप्तमग्रतो वस्त्रं पश्चात् शुष्यति वारिणा । दुष्कर्मापि तथा पश्चात् शुष्यते पुण्यकर्मणा ॥  
अलमन्यैरुपालब्धैः कीर्तितैश्च व्यतिक्रमैः । पेशलं चानुरूपं च कर्तव्यं हितमात्मनः ॥

When a man gives himself up to wrong ideas, his mind enters the sinful way. His own actions are soon tainted, and he is flung into deep woe. But striving habitually after the good, with faith, self-control and courage, men progress to greater and greater felicity. There are certain persons among us who do not make righteousness the principle of life. They are like chaff in the grains and like flies among birds. Whoever he be, man cannot escape the effect of his prior actions; he cannot outrun it. Even as trees would bring forth flowers and fruits in season, without being requisitioned by anybody, so also past deeds would never fail to fructify in proper time. What a person has done, productive of weal or woe, while tenanting a previous body, that he begins to experience from conception in the mother's womb. A calf recognises its mother and hastens to it in a herd consisting of thousands of milch cows. The merit and demerit of an action similarly befall the self-same agent. A cloth soiled by dirty water is cleansed by a thorough wash; so too wrong deeds are corrected and purified by right ones subsequently performed. It is no use censuring others or cataloguing transgressions. What is proper and good to each soul *must* be done.

Mahabharatha, XII, 179—3, 5, 8, 9, 13, 15, 17, 18 & 22.



## THE FAITH OF THE FUTURE

[The following lines embody some reflections on the spiritual ideal which humanity to-day stands in need of.]

### Some Modern Tendencies of Thought

**T**HE most painful experience of the 20th century man is the collapse of his faith, the basic factor that builds up the character and ensures the happiness of man. In speaking of this collapse, we have not the failure of religion alone in mind ; for that has taken place several times before in the history of thought. Men in the 19th century, for example, found it hard to believe in the promises of religion. The speciality of the 20th century, however, lies in that it has produced a conspiracy of circumstances that are hostile to a robust faith even in the social and political destinies of man. Science has no doubt extended our knowledge, increased our comforts and conveniences of life, and relieved our slavery to external nature in some respects. But, by placing unlimited power in the hands of brutal and unregenerate man, it has also tightened the grip of despotism and imperialism, dispelled the chances of the political and economic regeneration of backward races and nations, helped in the suppression of civil liberties and democratic institutions, and above all brought nearer than ever the most ruthless and destructive of all wars that may set back the clock of human progress by several centuries. That indeed is a reckless faith which speaks of the realisation of a glorious human destiny, even when war preparations are going

on at top-speed everywhere, when mock air-raids are rehearsed in the great capitals of the world, when jingoism tears up treaties and imperialism flouts the laws of man and God with impunity.

But faith and hope are the basic ingredients in the constitution of human nature, and to be starved in respect of them is the most miserable fate that man has to face in life. Even the Communist, who is so impatient of old beliefs in God, soul and spiritual life, has his own faith, as dogmatic as that of any one else, namely, that the world-order is tending towards the establishment of a classless, mechanised society having no difference of classes, no idea of individual liberty and no private property. But to-day for the reason stated before, no man with a grain of idealism in him can put faith in any theory of earthly perfectionism. It is only vulgar politicians, blood-thirsty militarists and greedy financiers, that find enough of congenial employment for their talents and feel delighted with the situation they have themselves helped to create. If they are honest, even science workers must feel humbled and dissatisfied with their favourite occupation, for the responsibility of science is not a little in bringing about the present impasse.

As a consequence of this situation, there has been a revival of interest in the spiritual in many unexpected quarters. At least a few among the leading men of science, philosophy

and psychology have begun to recognise the limitations of the scientific method and justify the claims of the spiritual and the mystical on the human mind. As indicative of this tendency, we just mention here the names of two prominent men who are recognised as authorities in their own subjects—Eddington, the well-known scientist with idealist leanings, whose daring pronouncements on the limitations of physical science and on the value of mysticism in understanding the secret of existence has created a scandal in the modern scientific world; and Jung, the illustrious pioneer of analytical psychology, who believes in the independent existence of Psychic Reality and its root principle, the Racial Unconscious, and who vigorously pleads for a proper religious outlook as the right cure for most cases of neurosis at the present time. This gives us an idea of the swing of opinion among leading thinkers who have not committed themselves to any cult of racialism, nationalism or imperialism.

### **Religion of the Spirit**

But this new religious impulse, which the excesses of modernism is bound to strengthen in course of time, will in all likelihood take a line of development different in many respects from the same in the past. For one thing, the faith of the future can neither be a barren other-worldliness having the flesh-torturing and society-shunning ascetic as the ideal, nor a mere apotheosis of humanity with welfare-work as its ritual and the social worker as its priest. It will have a content distinctively its own—an aspiration concerned essentially with the solitariness of one's own self; but

the conviction it gives and the enrichment of personality it imparts will also energise the active will and find expression in every-day life of society. While it will not dictate politics in the interests of any dogma, nor create a vested interest siding with other vested interests, as all religions in the past did, it will act as a leavening influence on all the activities of men—as a disembodied voice or an invisible perfume, sweetening, elevating, invigorating and purifying all the forces and products of human personality without in any way making its presence felt as a corporal, self-asserting entity with rights and interests opposed to everything else in the world. In the council chambers of men and in the great factories of the world, in the educational institutions and in the research laboratories, it will make itself felt as vigour of character and purity of motive, as cleanliness of life and width of sympathy, as spirit of reverence and scrupulous regard for justice, truth and fair play. In the future man of faith, the mainspring of such integrity and self-inmolation will not be any dry sense of duty or narrow sympathies of caste, race, class or nationality, but a vivid consciousness of the Divine Presence within and without, an exuberant joyousness born of identification of self-interest with universal interest, and of a feeling that life in all its phases is participation in the divine cosmic play. Like to the mountain cliff in the poet's vision, while the rolling clouds of the work-a-day world may gather round his breast, on his head, towering high above them all, will play the eternal sunshine of the Universal Spirit. The arsenal which he draws upon in his

struggle with the dark forces will be the inexhaustible might of the Divine Shakti ; the discipline that sustains him with invincible strength will be the practice of the presence of God everywhere. By the whole-hearted and unreserved surrender of all his faculties to the Divine, the baser metal in his personality is transformed into pure gold as with the touch of the Philosopher's Stone. A reed absolutely at the disposal of the Divine Piper, celestial symphonies, sweet and soul-stirring, come out through him ; a thunderbolt wielded by the Cosmic Spirit, he strikes straight and unerringly at unrighteousness and hypocrisy.

He would have mastered the secret of Yoga, which consists in unyielding vigilance coupled with complete dedication to the Divine. His heart, head and hand would work in mutual harmony, and play their part in unison with the throbbings of the Cosmic Heart. In keenness of intellect and intensity of concentration, in the fervour of emotion and in power of will, he would equally excel. For, the simultaneous culture and co-ordination of all these, consummated in a supreme surrender to the Divine, constitute the highest Yoga or perfect spiritualisation of man. Ethics crowned with insight, dynamism broad-based on inner calmness, joyous ecstasy founded on balance and purity of the inner essence,—these are the characteristics of the perfect man of faith, the ideal type of Yogi, who alone is the future hope of mankind.

### **A new orientation needed**

If such ought to be the ideal product of the faith of the future, it will be quite plain that religions as they

are constituted to-day require a thorough overhauling, in order that they may fulfill their true mission of ministering to the spiritual needs of men. For it seems to us that religions in the past have committed two egregious blunders, which, strangely enough, coincide with their usual division into the ethnic and universal types. Ethnic religions have usually shown a most obnoxious form of social narrowness, while universal religions have been guilty of dogmatism, which has often degenerated to inhuman levels.

Of the first, Hinduism is the most conspicuous example. There is no religion that can equal Hinduism in its freedom from the arrogance of dogmatic theology, and in its readiness to accommodate a diversity of beliefs that men require at different levels of their spiritual evolution. But by a strange process of thought, the Hindu as a social being underwent a contraction of outlook that appears to a plain man as contradicting his spiritual universalism in many respects. An arrested development of the herd instinct finally resulted in the unconscious admission of the principle, that a Hindu is born and never made. By this apotheosis of birth, the herd instinct of the race was arrested in its free and smooth development. Innumerable social taboos and curious, often ridiculous, notions of purity and impurity grew up like weeds in the soil of Hindu society, threatening the spiritual and cultural integrity of the race. It was indeed a dangerous moment in our history—now the moment is past—when the leaders of opinion in this country came to be convinced that contact with foreigners and foreign cultures was the most

unholy and degrading of experiences, and that birth was the supreme consideration in settling both the social and spiritual status of men. As a consequence, while Hinduism produced innumerable spiritual giants and conferred a high standard of mystical sense on men, it failed to organise the social will of its follows, except it be in the sense of a passive stubbornness, or, if otherwise, it did so only at particular times and in particular parts of the country. In the case of other ethnic religions, the consequences of an undue stress on birth have been still more disastrous; for example, the Jews, whose racial pride was invigorated by a fierce dogmatism, hated the rest of mankind and prided themselves as the chosen people of God; the world at large paid them back in their own coin, and the nemesis of their pride seems to be still dogging them.

Turning now to the so-called universal religions, we shall at first take Islam and Christianity for consideration, and reserve Buddhism to the end. In the case of both these religions, we find a wonderful capacity to transcend the barriers of birth, culture and geography, although in the case of Christianity this remark applies only with important reservations because of its identification with the white races and their strong colour prejudice. But these religions have done wonders in unifying the wills of people and in making them a force in the affairs of the world. Their weakness is in their dogmatism—the pernicious tendency to reduce religion into creeds and propositions. Their universalism meant the establishment of a uniformity of belief. They forgot

that religion was essentially an inner experience and confounded it with pure dogmatism. Whenever and wherever the purists of these religions had been predominant, they had discouraged the development of a mystical conception of religion, and had either suppressed or opposed men who dared to differ from the letter of the law and preach new ideas on the basis of their inner experience; for standardisation of men, not the encouragement of the exceptional type, had been their aim. Under the influence of this craze for uniformity, they were firmly convinced that no dissenter can ever gain salvation, and in this conviction they found a justification for the use of force and other questionable methods in spreading their creed and in forcing their dogma down the throat of other people. Ideas of this kind were responsible for bloody persecutions that have marred the history of religions in this world. Thus it will be seen that the control which these religions have exercised over the will of men was not always made use of for furthering the true religious end.

The faith of the future can afford to blunder neither on the side of social exclusiveness, nor on that of narrow dogmatism. For, a faith which encourages the illusion of a chosen people of God will only be another edition of the modern vices of racialism and nationalism, while dogmas, falsifying each other by their mutual condemnation and exclusive claim to be the only true religion, will only provoke ridicule in place of generating respect in a critical age. Cultured men who are impartial in their sympathies will ask: Why not the Bhagavad Gita in place of the Bible

or the Quran ? Why should Christ be considered unique, and not Buddha ? In this age when the study of comparative religions is making great headway, all the great religions of the world either stand together or fall together. There is no scripture that is so immaculate and so divine that it does not bear the impress of the virtues as well as the vices of the age and the race which produced them. The universal and the temporal notes intermingle in their music. The faith of the future will therefore have to be based upon a more secure foundation, and its sanction will have to be one which carries conviction directly to the heart. Spiritual experience is the only proof that fulfils these conditions ; for it is much more universal than creed-bound religions, and there is in it a directness and experimental bias, which dogmatics lack so woefully. The faith of the future will therefore have to concern itself with spiritual practices leading to the immediate apprehension of the Supreme Truth.

The work of organising the popular will round particular issues, which religions in the past used to do, will have to be assumed by various political, economic and social ideals. Religion as an organised interest will not interfere in these matters, or create a division in the aspirations of people, but by its influence on character and by the awakening of the latent spiritual potentialities of men, it will brace up the moral fibre of mankind, endow humanity with a better sense of righteousness and provide it with leaders having wide sympathies and possessing a vision and a true spirit of unselfishness. The salvaging of politics and economics

can be achieved only this way. It cannot be done by the dominance of an unblushing secularism or by the rule of a conservative theocracy.

### **The Apostles of the New Faith**

The faith of the future will therefore have to justify its existence not by cheap heresy-hunting dogmatism, nor by launching crusades and holy wars, but by the help it renders the spiritually hungry in practising the presence of God, by the number of godly men it throws into society—veritable fire-brands of God who spread the conflagration of divine passions wherever they go. These apostles of the faith will care as little for the creeds and the theological persuasions of people as they do for the wealth and the social status of men. Any creed will do, provided it helps men to lead clean and dedicated lives, any theology justifies itself, provided it promotes in men a hunger for righteousness and a thirst for the Supreme Truth. Men may believe in the redemptive power of Christ's sacrifice on the cross ; they may worship God in the image or in the sacrificial fire ; they may participate in the passionate love of Radha for Krishna ; they may proclaim their belief in the unity of God and the prophethood of Mahommed. The apostles of the new faith will know that all these creeds are pathways to God in so far as men use them for the culture of holiness, in place of degrading them into mere theological standards round which they may gather in their conflicts with other creeds. Their ministry will consist in fulfilment, not in destruction ; in harmonising the differences, not in accentuating the blood feudes among religions. En-

dowed with broad spiritual sympathies, they will impress on men the universality of their outlook, and impart to them the conviction that creeds do not matter so long as men lead a righteous life. And above all, by their life and example more than through their preachings and writings, they will spread among men a living, contagious faith in God and the spiritual destiny of man—a faith which, unlike the type rendered barren by the worm of worldliness, sprouts into spiritual yearnings and fructifies into God-realisation. In other words, under their influence, the centre of gravity in religion will shift from dogmatism to spiritual experience, and conflicts between creeds will be a thing of the past.

### **The Need of the Day**

There are many to-day who predict a dismal future for religion. Some, referring to it, speak of 'the future of an illusion'; others describe it as an opiate of the people which no State should tolerate. Some again characterise it as the universal neurosis of humanity; others condemn it as an outgrowth of fear in man. Still others there are who are prepared to grant that it has some social utility, which man is, however, fast outgrowing to-day; there are also some who admit its power to reconcile man with his environment but who cannot see any ultimate truth in it. It must however be stated side by side, that there are also many distinguished thinkers on the side of religion, who are convinced of its truth, its usefulness and its sure chances of survival in society. The names of two such we have already mentioned in the beginning. These opinions of

leading thinkers, both friendly and hostile, only go to show how religion is pressing its claim powerfully on the imagination of men. For even hostility is the sign of powerful interest; the panicky state of mind is in itself a recognition of the strength on the opposing side. For one thing, we find to-day such a large output of excellent books on religion, showing deep insight and patient research on the part of their writers, that one is led to wonder why so many brilliant thinkers should spend their energies in either dismantling or reconstructing the castle of religion, if it were really as antiquated and fast collapsing as we are sometimes given to understand.

As we said before, the fact seems to be that the discontent is with religion as a dogma or as an institution, not with religion as a spiritual leaven. Therefore the preaching of any dogmatic religion among the educated and intelligent men of the modern world will serve only as the best way for defeating a spiritual revival. The exclusive claims of a dogma or a Church of the Roman Catholic type may give a haven of rest to many at a certain stage of development. But as soon as cultural refinement develops in man a distaste to pure authoritarianism, he either revolts against religion as a whole, or yearns for something that claims his soul more than his credulity—something that helps him to deepen his conviction without narrowing his outlook. It is this need that the faith of the future has to fulfil. And this can be done only if there is in the world a sufficient number of men with true spiritual illumination, bearing on themselves the impress of Divinity and

standing before mankind as witnesses of the Most High. In an age when acceptance comes only after experimenting, the presence of such demonstrators of man's spiritual possibilities is the one condition under which a spiritual revival can take place. But the culturing of such ardent, divinised souls, the true teachers of humanity, is a task beset with innumerable difficulties. For right material is so difficult to find, and equally so is the right environment. "Rare indeed is the true teacher, and rare, the true disciple. Rare too is the one who can realise it when instructed by the true teacher," says an Indian scripture. Yet considering its great importance to the future of mankind, it is an educational experiment on which it is worthwhile for society to concentrate upon. Many whose conception

of the 'good life' is limited to a high standard of living, to the procuring of more food, leisure and instinctive satisfaction for men, may consider the time and wealth spent on it as a waste. Strange indeed is the wisdom of such critics whose sense of economy and equity is outraged at the pittance spent on such experiments with great possibilities, but who will view with complacence a state of affairs that tolerates money to be spent like water for catering to the lusts and vulgar desires of the rich few as well as the poor many, and also allow a system of public life requiring the unproductive squandering of the major part of the world's revenues for keeping men brutalised in barracks and for manufacturing poison gases in the high-sounding name of national defence.

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## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

*By A Disciple*

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was both wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped like a Goddess by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of every-day life.]

**I**N December of 1910, I first visited the Holy Mother at Kothar, in Orissa. Two other devotees, Hemanta and Birendra, accompanied me from Shillong. Many devotees, lay and monastic, had been staying with the Holy Mother. We carried some fruits and honey for her with us. It was about one o'clock in the afternoon when we reached our destination. The fruits and honey were sent

to the Mother. After finishing our bath, we were asked to go for lunch. In the meantime the monastic disciples of the Holy Mother began to whisper among themselves about us. "Those devotees have come a long distance. They must meet the Mother; but it will not be possible for them to talk a long time with her." After some time, we were permitted to see her. As we entered the

inner apartment, we saw the Mother seated in the verandah, with the veil drawn over her face. Her whole body was wrapped with a sheet. As we came near her, Golap-ma said, "Oh, they are mere children. They have come from such a long distance. They have crossed seven oceans and thirteen rivers in order to pay their respects to you." As soon as the Mother heard those remarks, she removed the veil, and we had the opportunity to look at her closely. After that day, the Mother never drew her veil when we saw her. I prostrated before her and repeated mentally, "I have come to take shelter at your feet." The Mother blessed me by placing her hand on my head and said, "May you get devotion."

Disciple : Mother, it is our intention to stay here for a day or two. This is a rich man's house. It will be very difficult for us to see you.

Mother : Don't worry, my child. I shall send for you. Now take your meal, and rest for a while.

In the afternoon, Golap-ma brought us a cup of rice pudding as a blessing from Holy Mother and said that the Mother had sent it for us. After a while we were informed that the Mother wanted to see us. We had the privilege of saluting her again. I told the Mother that we wanted to have a few words with her, which we did not like any one else to hear. The Mother agreed, and asked the person who had accompanied us to leave the room. I then narrated to the Mother the dream experiences I had had about her and Sri Ramakrishna. She said that these dreams were all correct. Referring to the other two devotees who had accom-

panied me from Shillong, the Mother asked, "What is their desire?"

Disciple : They have come to you for initiation. Now it all depends upon you.

Mother : Very well, come tomorrow. See me tomorrow morning after your bath.

Disciple : Mother, Sri Ramakrishna worshipped your feet. It is also our desire to offer flowers at your holy feet.

Mother : If you wish, you may do that.

Disciple : Where shall we get flowers?

Mother : People here will procure them for you.

We prostrated before her and came away. Next day, after bathing, we were ready with the flowers. The Mother asked us to come one after the other. I was the first to go in. I found the Mother waiting for us, after having finished her daily worship. She said to me, "You follow the direction which you have received from Sri Ramakrishna in dream. I shall also give you something." She then initiated me by uttering the sacred word into my ear. Next I worshipped her sacred feet. The Mother stood up and accepted my worship. I said to her that I did not know any ritual for the worship. She said, "Simply offer the flowers; that will do." I made the offering, uttering the words, "Victory unto the Divine Mother." There was a white flower. The Mother said, "Do not offer that one. People worship Shiva with white flowers."

I brought a piece of cloth for the Mother with me. I offered it with a rupee. At the sight of the money, she said, "You are poor. Why should



you offer that money ? ” I had never told her about my pecuniary difficulties, but I found that she knew everything about it. I said to her, “ This is your money, and I am offering you what is really yours. We think ourselves very fortunate if we can be of the slightest service to you, through what we can earn by the sweat of the brow.”

Mother : What an attraction.

\* \* \*

After that I never asked the Mother any question about her real nature. Then I said to the Mother, “ Mother, I want to see, touch and talk to God as I am doing with regard to you. I want to see Him as tangibly as I see you. Please bless me so that my desire may be fulfilled.”

Mother : Yes, I bless you that you may realise what you desire.

Next day as I was about to take leave of the Mother I saw her benign countenance, a face radiant with smiles. Golap-ma said to me, “ Why don't you make a pilgrimage to Puri ? ” I said to her, “ What else should I see ? If one sees the holy feet of the Mother, one actually earns the merit of visiting millions of sacred places. I do not want anything more.” The Mother said, at my words, “ It is not necessary for you to go to Puri.”

One day I asked the Mother if the result of the Prarabdha\* could be avoided if one repeated the name of God.

Mother : One must experience the result of the Prarabdha work. No one can escape it. But the repetition of God's holy name minimises its in-

tensity. It is like the case of a man who is destined to lose his leg, but instead he suffers from the prick of a thorn in his foot.

Disciple : It is impossible for me, Mother to practise any spiritual discipline, nor do I expect in future to lead an intensely spiritual life.

Mother : Don't worry about it. Be satisfied with what you are doing. Always remember that Sri Ramakrishna is protecting you. I also always stand by you.

One day Radhu was very ill. She became unusually restless. The Mother asked me, “ My child, please examine her. What is the matter with her ? ” I did not know how to take the pulse of a patient, but in order to reassure the Mother, I felt Radhu's pulse and said, “ There is nothing serious about it. She has become a little weak. Please give her some milk to drink.” The Holy Mother possessed a childlike nature. She at once began to feed Radhu with milk. After a while, Radhu's mother came there and sat near her. Radhu became extremely nervous, as she did not like her mother to be with her. The Holy Mother gave Radhu's mother a gentle push and said, “ Please go away.” Suddenly her hand touched the feet of Radhu's mother, which made the latter exceedingly uneasy and she cried out, “ Why did you touch my feet ? There is something evil in store for me.† ” The mother began to laugh at her attitude. Rashbihary Maharaj said, “ Mother, look at her. She is insane. She often abuses you ; she even likes to beat you, but she is seized with fear

\* The work done in the past life as a result of which one gets his present body.

† Among the Hindus it is considered an evil omen if an elder touches the feet of a younger person.

because your hand has touched her feet." The Mother said, "My dear child, Ravana knew quite well that Rama was Narayana himself, the fullest embodiment of divinity, and his consort Sita was the Mother of the Universe, the Primordial Prakriti, but still he ill-treated her. This insane woman, Radhu's mother, knows quite well who I am ; still she must act according to her previous tendencies."

Referring to the rheumatism of her feet, I said, "Mother, we hear that you have got this illness by accepting the responsibility for the sins of your devotees. But it is my most sincere prayer to you, Mother, that you do not suffer for me. Let me alone reap the result of my own Karina."

Alas ! What a compassionate teacher she revealed herself to be to us.

I prostrated before the Mother when I was about to leave Jayrambati. She blessed me by placing her hand on my head, and said with great tenderness, "I know it is your desire to stay with me. But what can you do ? You have your responsibility to your family." Just as a mother comes for some distance with her son, when the latter undertakes a journey to a foreign land, so also the Holy Mother accompanied me part of the way to see me off. When we parted, she looked at me with tearful eyes for a long time.

Mother : How is that, my child ? Please be peaceful and happy, and let me suffer for you all.

## THE VOICE OF INDIA

*By Dr. Adolphe Ferriere*

[In the following article Dr. Adolphe Ferriere touches upon several essential principles of Hindu religion and culture, the main source on which he draws being the works of Romain Rolland on Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. Dr. Ferriere is the founder, and at present the soul, of the New Education Fellowship. Besides being the editor of *L'Ere Nouvelle*, the organ of the New Education Fellowship on the Continent, he is the author of a number of volumes on New Education, which have been translated into several European languages. From the domain of sociology and education, in which he gained fame in his early years, he is now being recognised more and more as a writer on philosophical and spiritual subjects, especially after his work *Le Progres Spirituel*.]

IF I should address myself in these pages to my friends of India, if I should wish to seek to convince them of the universality of the Religion of the Spirit—the service of the One God—, if I should resort, for this demonstration, to their scriptures and their sages of all time, it seems to me that I should tell them somewhat as follows :—

### THE IMMANENT AND THE TRANSCENDENT

Given as it is to reflect on the eternal things that are external to man, and what is more, on those that are internal to himself, India should, even before barbarous Occident, be able to conceive clearly the directions in which lie the primordial inspiration

and the transcendental aspiration of humanity. To you, as to us, religion, as Romain Rolland writes (*Ramakrishna*, page 16 \*), is the "welling up at the source." "There are in us the instincts," says Swami Vivekananda (II:53), "which are common to us with animals. There is the guide which is higher and which we call the reasoning power, and which, mastering facts, makes generalisations with regard to them. There is inspiration which, without contradicting reason, understands things in a flash. .... The protoplasm had to contain this energy (93) ...." For, "the force which takes hold of matter to build up the body is the same which manifests itself in and through the body ..... (93) and all evolution pre-supposes an involution." (92.) "Therefore the 'I' has been the product of the hidden Infinite in the process of its external manifestation," writes Romain Rolland, commenting on Vivekananda (II:118). In everything and everywhere "the new order of things should be a growth from within ...., the vital liquid which from the inside of roots mounts to the summit of the tree (151) ..... Creative force .... that thing which motivates." (194.)

This immanent God is the same as the transcendent God towards whom man raises himself, who awaits him

at the goal, whom he calls the Absolute. "All men strive by ways which in the end lead to Me .... Whosoever comes to Me, under whatever form it may be, I come to him," one reads in the sacred book of India. (V. 1, 46.) .... Thus, the spirit finds at the end what obtained at the start. After the descent of inspiration there is ascent. "We have to do again the march in the opposite direction, towards our original state of infinity," comments Romain Rolland (II, 118). Keshab (R. 136) proposes a figure in the form of a triangle which is hardly different from what I have proposed. "The Father at the top. By means of the Son, God descends and falls at the base of humanity. By means of the Holy Ghost, God draws to Himself degenerated humanity. The descending Divinity is the Son. The re-ascending Divinity which takes the souls to the Father is the Holy Ghost" (R. 136). It is true that Keshab, when he wrote this, thought himself under the influence of Christianity. From this source are the terms which he employs. "You are not yet myself, but I seek for you," says the inspired one. "I am He !" says Ramakrishna in his ecstasy. (Mukerji "The Face of Silence," 162). "That which is, is nothing but a realisation of a pre-existent potentiality, just as the potentiality of the present is but an index of a reality of the future." (Aurobindo Ghose, V. II, 88) "From all these, one single fact stands out, one single dogma : the potential divinity of man and his power of endless evolution." (Vivekananda, I, 47)

#### RENUNCIATION AND UNIVERSALISM

It is a common conception among Hindus to think of the life of a saint

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\* With a view to avoid excess of notes at the foot of pages, I shall signify, in the text, the most often cited works by abbreviations. R. will signify the volume on *Ramakrishna* by Romain Rolland ; V. will signify Volume I of *Vivekananda* by the same author ; and II will signify the 2nd volume of the same work. M. signifies Mukerji's "The Face of Silence." (French translation by Madame Gabrielle Godet, Paris, Attinger, 1932.)

as a return to Godhood—a return which presupposes a detachment from everything small as well as big that ties man to matter ; and sometimes the inspiration and the aspiration meet one another in him and fight one against the other. Thus says Vivekananda, “He has been *destined* by the Unknown Force which dictated his mission .....but the other inner voice said to him ‘Renounce ! Live in Godhood !’” (V. I, 49) His Guru, Ramakrishna, on his part had attained the goal—the ecstasy of Samadhi. “The man who reaches this stage must necessarily have abandoned everything pertaining to his self.” (M. 50)

Thus have you, O friends of India, understood your saints and sages—your sages who aspire for a “new rationalism which is broader but conscious of its limits, which is allied to a new intuitionism established on a firmer foundation.” (V. II, 195) ; your saints who are also thus members of an invisible church. “The man who has ‘renounced,’ the *Sannyasin*, raises himself above the Vedas,” say the Vedas themselves, “for he is free from sects and churches and prophets.” (V. I, 162) There is for him “a co-operation of invisible forces.” (M. 176.) “Religion is,” for Vivekananda, “synonymous with an universalist outlook ; and it is only when the ‘religious’ concepts shall have attained to this universalism that religion would come to its fullness. For, contrary to all that is believed by those who do not understand it, religion is of the future, much more than of the past.” (V. II, 102) In fact, the religions of the past, where they survive, are too often ‘closed’ religions, and their followers are not “living.”

They have no right whatsoever to call themselves “religious,” they “do not believe for themselves” but nourish themselves “on the convenient beliefs, which they have nothing but pain in ruminating over.” (R. 15) No better are those who defy “all combatants who hold forms of thought which are different” from their own. (R. 145) “Those who hold only one view make of their poverty an obligatory virtue.” (V. I, 49) And the Bhagavad Gita had already held up to ridicule all bigots.

On the other hand, narrow traditionalists and narrow rationalists try their strength. The reasoning intellect, taken out of its unique and necessary context, namely, life, cannot but be an element of misunderstanding. “Do not discuss over doctrines and on religions,” says Ramakrishna (R. 265) “There is but one.” “Religion is the way which should lead you to God,” says he elsewhere (M. 76) ; “it is not a house . . . , each one boasting of his own and depreciating the products of the neighbour. Go, therefore, to the end of the route, and meditate on Him who has no end. For He alone could extinguish the ardour of your quarrels.” “It does not matter what opinion anyone might hold ; what matters is the life that is lived.” (M. 235) Gandhi is also opposed, like Ramakrishna, to all particular religious propaganda by speech or by writing. Our religious experiences are “not necessarily shared by others.” Neither are they communicable. “If you wish (by means of reasoning) that another should receive your spiritual experience, you are placing between him and yourself an intellectual barrier.” (R. 176-177) Ramakrishna had un-

derstood this. "He communicated to you saintliness but he left you free, and never did he ask you to do something to please him," says one of his disciples (M. 213).

#### THE PLACE OF CULT AND RITUALISM

It is the same thing in the matter of cult. It could only revive what is already in man. If he does not see anything in it, it remains as mere formalism. "If they do not make our heart sing with joy, the rituals and routine observances of a religious cult are of no use whatsoever. The flower falls from the tree at the moment when the fruit appears. Thus, the rites and prayers should detach themselves, like the scales, from a liberated soul. Salvation is to the soul what liberty is to the prisoner," says Ramakrishna. (M. 78) In spite of this, Vivekananda had realised the need, for certain types of persons, to have a certain ritualism, destined to mitigate "the weakness of man who, without these prescribed and repeated formalities, is incapable of keeping the memory and the living trace of religious experience." (V. I, 180) But let us take care that rites do not become a hindrance and fail to be a support—which happens when one stops with them. If one stops in this way, one believes oneself to be "in conformity with the demands of heaven" when one is not in accord with the requirements of the world. One does not live religiously any more. One runs the risk of seeing the inner source getting dried up.

#### RELIGION OF TRUTH AND SINCERITY

It is better to seek the Truth without "religion" than to seek religion without Truth. If thought "un-

dauntedly follows the research of Truth at any cost, with a complete sincerity which is prepared for any sacrifice," says Romain Rolland (R., 15), "I would call it religious; for it presupposes faith in a goal to be attained by human effort, which is superior to the life of the individual, and, perhaps, of the present society and even of humanity as a whole". "The vital point is the ardent desire for Truth," Ramakrishna used to say; "... only you should have sincerity." (R. 201)

A soul passionately following pure Truth is equal to "a religious soul", whatever may be otherwise its professed belief, religion or philosophy serving as the general plan, support or central core of its convictions. Pure Truth—and let us remember in this connection "the pious atheists" of Charles Wagner! "Not only is it not useful to adhere rigidly to certain dogmas," says Ramakrishna (M., 197), "but also it could do harm to your soul. If you knew God, you would not burden yourself with religious doctrines. You may have read all the sacred books, believed in all the messages revealed by every one of the Sons of God,—and in spite of these you may not be able to find God. Raise yourself above books and masters, and contemplate on Him whom they have contemplated upon ..... Then all mysteries shall unravel themselves to you suddenly!"

Already the ancient Raja Yoga insisted on the pre-eminence of the foundation aspect to the form or superstructure aspect. "The teaching of the Raja Yoga does not ask you, 'what you believe in.' Do not believe in anything till such time as you yourself have established your

belief ! . . . . . All human beings have the right and the duty to make use of this liberty." (V. II, 71) In connection with Jnana Yoga, Vivekananda re-echoes the same idea : "I am sure that God will pardon one who, making use of his reason, does not believe—more than him who believes blindly without making use of the faculties which were given by Him . . . . . We should follow reason and sympathise with those who do not arrive at any sort of belief in the pursuit of reason." (V. II, 78-79) "Better not to believe than not to have experience" (Ibid. p. 87) ; for religion and life are, and ought to be, but ONE. This is how the Hindu sage had had the privilege to meet in his life "many persons full of good sense and spirituality, who did not believe at all in God (i.e., in the ordinary sense we give to this word). Perhaps they understood God better than what we could ever make them." (Ibid., 101.) What a fine delicacy in this parenthetical clause ! Is this not the key to all ?

"A man," he writes again (Ibid., 30), "might never have studied even one single system of philosophy, he could not, and might not, have ever believed in any God, he might not have prayed even once in his life,—if the simple power of his actions has brought him to that state in which he is prepared to give his life and all that he had and has, to others, he has arrived to the highest that a religious man could attain by his prayers, and a philosopher by his knowledge ; that is to say, Nivritti or self-abnegation."

#### THE ONE IN THE MANY

Better than our savants, O friends of India, your sages have known to

see the One in the many,—the gods in God, the diverse religions in Religion and God in every man.

Keshab (R. 129) insists on the fact that all the divinities of Polytheism embody the attributes of the One God. Because of this, he asks us that we praise the One God through these three hundred and thirty crores of attributes. A God "undivided" runs the risk of remaining an abstract God, he thinks. In the same manner, Vivekananda (V. I, 25) considers that religions vary in quality according to the "diverse stages of development of the human being, which gravitates towards the summit of his ideal." And just as we should love men with all their gods, "we should love God in all the varieties of men." (R. 87) "All beliefs, all doctrines are only diverse forms, distributed fragments of a whole and unique truth ; all disciplines tend by different roads to the identical goal, to a Supreme Experience. To know, to possess, to be Divine, such is the only thing necessary, which comprises all the rest . . . . And all that the Divine Will thereafter chooses for us, every means, every useful form of expression, shall add itself on to it as an accretion." (Aurobindo Ghose : *The Synthesis of Yoga*, R. 290)

All these conceptions have their source in the passage from the Vedas already cited. The man who has "renounced" is free from the church. He is in God and God is in him. "The history of the world," says Vivekananda (V. 1, 162), "is that of a few men who have had faith in themselves. This faith caused the Divinity to rise up and manifest itself."

His Guru, Ramakrishna, had never ceased to remind his disciples : " Do you search for God ? Well then, seek Him in man ! Divinity is more manifest in man than in any other object". (R. 193) " True charity," says he again (Ibid., 213), " is the love of God in all men ; for God is incarnated in man." " For, the core of the universe is in the individual " (V. I, 92.) " Pray to the Father who is in you," says the same Gospel. " Each soul," repeats Vivekananda (V. II, 115), " is potentially divine in power. The object is to manifest this divine in him," and to love ! For, " if we see God in our neighbour, that would mean that God is within us." (Ibid., 121) One could multiply quotations. (Cf. V., I, 47, 133, 139, 177 ; V., II, 52, 120, 12., 123, 128.)

One God, but types of human beings in infinite variety ! " He lights as many lights as there are pious pilgrims," says Ramakrishna. (M. 196) If God is infinite, the roads which lead to Him ought to be infinite also . . . . " All roads leading to Truth," says he again (M. 205), " take one to the same God." " Variety is the sign of life," says Vivekananda (V. II, 107). There could be " as many forms of thinking as there are human beings " !

Certain sages of India even see, between the two extreme positions of the One and the infinite manifoldness, types and stages. The ecstatic stages revealed by Mukerji (Opt. Cit., 155-161) are almost identical with the six stages which I have mentioned elsewhere. And with regard to the principle of types, it ought to have been at the basis of the castes. The rigid castes constitute, without any doubt, a state of degeneration, an ossification

of the principle of heredity and of education, which had originally for their object only the accentuation of certain *aptitudes*. Then, duty went before right, and the usefulness of each caste to society went before its privileges. This is what is brought out by Bhagavan Das (cited by C. W. Washburne : *Remakers of Mankind*, New York, 1932.) " Castes did not signify anything more than a classification of aptitudes ; they have made them into prisons."

#### RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUAL'S NATURE

To see God in each and every person, to respect and serve God in each person, allowing to each person the liberty of serving God in accordance with his own nature—these are so many aspects, theoretical as well as practical, of the same fundamental verity.

In this also, the sages of India have preceded us, Occidentals. They have seen that each person should be able to realise fully, in accordance with his own nature—not with his own whole nature, good and bad, error and verity, beauty and ugliness, but with what is best in him—, in the direction of divine action which manifests itself in him. " The only force that matters is personal realisation, and this within ourselves." (V. II, 80)

This respect for the nature of each individual was, let us remember, the characteristic feature of the influence of Ramakrishna on his disciples. " Never would he have thought of imposing on them a way of thinking or of action that would defeat their own inner nature. . . . Because all nature to him was of God, the task and duty was to develop each nature in its own innate direction, thus making it

reach its fullness . . . . " (R. 183-184) "He therefore offered all the means of liberation, to drink at the fountain of inner life, to participate in the joy of universal Existence—which is in each one of us, and which is God—, without going against their own inner nature, without mutilating them or forcing them, and above all not doing harm to even a hair of any one dependent on them. . . ." (R., 200.) "The teacher should take care not to obstruct development by interposing himself between sunlight and human plants." (R. 206-207) For, Ramakrishna is sure that God speaks to the soul that listens, that belief in God is, at least in a latent form, found in each person, and that "all healthy and sincere beings will reach Him by themselves, and only by themselves. He has, therefore, no other concern than to make of his disciples, sincere and healthy human beings." (R. 208) How should we, then, be surprised when we find that he "varies his manner according to each temperament, to such an extent as to appear as if he is supporting two contradictory positions" ? (R. 216) His disciples acquired, under his influence, a clearer vision of their own natural ideals." (R. 225, Cf. Mukerji pp. 69, 71, 204, 233, 235, 254.)

As was the master, so his disciple Vivekananda. "The words of the master cannot be effective," says he (V., II, 40-41), "except if the master forgets himself in him whom he counsels, whose nature he espouses and aids to discern it and work out his own law by his own individual methods . . . ." "One does not teach others," says he again (V. II, 51), "each one has to teach himself. One could only aid others." He mentions

the "enormous harm which is being done in this world by the false ways of teaching which kills the profound souls of millions of innocent children ! How many beautiful seedlings that should become marvellous representatives of spiritual truth are thus stifled ! . . . ." Is there need to say that the present writer sees in the Hindu thinker who said this, a comrade in arms in the great battle of his life ?

Vivekananda draws the conclusions from this principle. The young human plant should live. "Let us clear away the obstacles, let us open to it sufficient air and space so that it might develop. Nothing more ! Its growth should come and will come from within." (V. II, 113) The whole of this page is to be read, and could well be posted up in every school and in every church ! The object remains—the awakening of the spirit in every one, guiding individuals and nations to the conquest of their inner kingdom, by their own proper ways which suit them best, by the methods which could respond to that empty want from which they have had most to suffer. Each one is asked to be as fully and as intensely what he is—which is his God." (V. II, 139) It is a saying of Pindare : "Become he that is yourself." (Cf., also Vivekananda, II, 107, 170, 241, etc.)

#### LOVE AND SERVICE OF THE NEIGHBOUR

And how will this deep-seated nature which is of God—which is God in man—manifest itself in the beginning ? Is it in the form of a creed ? No. Is it in the form of mystical emotions ? No, or rather not exclusively. "God is love." Therefore, true religion signifies the love and service of one's neighbour and of humanity.



God alone is the Master, said Ramakrishna on his death-bed. (M. 226) "It is by His power that you act . . . It is by His love that you witness within you a great love for the world. A living love, living the God which is in you—that is to live by the "love and service of men." (R. 185) Service is the 'motive force' (Ibid.) of a religion that is lived. But this service has for its centre the inner divine core of our fellow man. The rest is all means to this end. "That which you should do, is to see in every living being the supreme God, and to serve it as such." (M. 129)

In his turn the disciple says: "That man alone adores God, who serves all beings . . . . He who wants to serve God, let him serve men." V. II, 113) But, I repeat, this service presupposes all others. It presupposes social service in the most comprehensive sense of the term. It presupposes a constant activity in the matter of social justice. And this is why Vivekananda had created 'societies for social service'—*Sevasamitis*,—and "he circumscribed service with a divine halo and elevated it to the dignity of a religion." (V. II, 131) "Commence by giving your life for saving the lives of those that die," said he. (V. II, 132) In that lies the essence of religion." "The only one who will be the victorious in space and in time is that one who gives—who gives his all—without any thought of return." (V. II, 157, Cf., also 68, 121, etc.) Without renunciation no religion can endure. . ." (V. 162)

Swami Shivananda of the Belur Math has summarised this conception of the religion of service of God in humanity in a declaration which is

highly spiritual (Cf., V. II, 124.) : "If the highest illumination directs itself at nothing less than the effacement of all distinctions between the individual soul and the Universal Soul, if its ideal is to establish the complete identity of its own self with Omnipresent Brahman, it follows naturally that the highest spiritual experience could not but conduct us to a sublime consecration of oneself for the good of all."

### NEW CATHOLIC OUTLOOK

When religion is thus conceived, there is nothing that will be against its being the sharing—or better, the commonweal—of all human beings, so that it will unite the entire globe, as Jesus had wished, under the reign of one single God, and so that there could be established what I would call "a new catholic outlook." And in fact,—invisible though it be—this catholicity exists !

"If the different religions are not anything but the diverse means of finding God, why should we quarrel over their respective merits and faults ? All that is entirely useless," proclaimed Ramakrishna. (M. 66) The flame is one and the same, but the eyes of men see it in different colours." (Ibid.) In this he only paraphrased the Vedas : "The Truth is One, they call it variously" (V. II, 129), and the rejoinder which came across space, from Emerson, the sage of America, in 1838, declared also : "All beings proceed from the same Spirit which has different names—Love, Justice, Wisdom—in its diverse manifestations, just as the ocean receives other names when it washes other shores." (Cited in V. I, 56)

### LIBERTY THROUGH OBEDIENCE AND CONQUEST OF EGO

Finally, is not finding God death to everything in oneself? "*Strib und werde*," had said Goethe. Yes, die to oneself to be reborn to the *Spirit*! And this is also the essence of the New Catholicity. For Hindus, Raja Yoga leads them to the death of the ego and to this resurrection, by means of the control and complete mastery of the Spirit. (V. II, 62.) Man attains thus, by Obedience, the highest Liberty that exists. Through the ages, religion has sought this liberty, "supreme liberty which they projected as a God" (V. II, 22.)—the aim of the millions of beings who grope in search of Him (V. II, 23) who is the ultimate goal of each one, the "nature of each one," as one reads in the Advaita, and who, it adds, con-

stitutes (V. II, 24) the 'I' or the "Super-Self" as named by the modern psychoanalysts.

"The whole universe works for what?" asks Vivekananda (V. II, 33), and he replies, "for liberty. From the atom to the most perfected being, all work for the same object: for the liberty of the body, for the liberty of the Spirit." Another great Hindu, Aurobindo Ghose, lays down (V. II, 193), "One does not liberate oneself fully except by accepting with a strong feeling of joy the essential Nature, except by espousing it and dominating it.... with the heart of Unity conquered,... the whole of Life, the cosmic Play is kissed in its infinite multiplicity by all our energies in a state of full consciousness and with open eyes. God acts in, and through, man."

## SAINT RAMAKRISHNA

By T. L. Vaswani

[Sadhu Vaswani, the well-known writer and teacher of modern India, gives, in the inspiring words that follow, a brief account of the message and personality of Sri Ramakrishna.]

Lo! the nations broken lie, the world is gone astray!  
Hark! Ramakrishna calleth! Who will go and work today?

### THE STREAM OF HISTORY

**I**NDIVIDUALS, not organisations, Individuals, not systems, Individuals, not opinions and institutions, are the central energy of the stream of History. The true leaders of Humanity are its seers and saints.

One of them was Sri Ramakrishna

### LIVES OF SAINTS

St. Bonaventura wrote the life of St. Francis. A saint is required to

write the life of St. Ramakrishna whose simplicity was the simplicity of St. Francis. Such a life will be the fruit of meditation and fellowship.

### THE POOR AND THE PURE

"Blessed are the poor in spirit," said Jesus, and again, "Blessed are the pure in heart." Sri Ramakrishna belonged to the blessed band of the poor and the pure. He was the picture of humility and love, and he had such

a horror of honours, riches, and what the world calls "greatness." To-day princes and professors deem it an honour to pay homage to this son of a poor villager, this simple servant of God and man.

#### THE BREATH DIVINE

How wonderfully well he assimilated the spirit of the Saints ! He drew into himself the Breath Divine of Krishna and Christ, and of all the prophets and saints. He fled from the shadow of any desire for prominence. Like Krishna, like Jesus, Ramakrishna loved the little ones, loved children, and blessed them. Ramakrishna had no desire to shine before men. The story of his life is really a story of inner life. His adventures were in the inner life of the spirit. He was a hero ; but his heroism lay in that self-conquest which, *Mohammed* says, is more than many a martyrdom. He fasted—in secret. He had fellowship with God,—in secret. Gazing at the beauty of his child-like face, I have said to myself, again and again : " In his life hath shown anew the Light Eternal ! "

#### HEIGHTS OF HOLINESS

A century ago, was born the Blessed One. He was born in a village named Kamarpukur. He reached unspeakable heights of holiness ; and the villager Gadadhar has become the Ramakrishna to whom the world pays homage to-day. I recall the words of Jalaluddin Rumi, the mystic of Iran :

" O thou that converteth salt earth  
into bread

And bread again into the life of  
man,

Thou makest some earth-born men  
as heaven,

And multiplieth heaven-born saints  
on earth."

#### SYMBOL OF TRUE INDIA

I think of Sri Ramakrishna as a symbol of that true India which stands for supremacy of the Atman, as the West to-day stands for supremacy of an intensely individualised intelligence.

In him I see the face of Hidden India. In him I see a radiance of the Self-Revealing God. And I recall again the words of Jalaluddin Rumi :

" The worker is here in His workshop ;

Enter the Workshop and behold  
Him face to face ;

A veil is drawn over the worker by  
His work ;

Come ! Behold Him in His work !

#### PEARLS OF GREAT PRICE

The Saints are His workshop. Their holiness, their love, their words of wisdom, are His "work." Read the "sayings" of Saint Ramakrishna ! How rich in the wisdom of the spirit ! Here are a few of these "sayings," precious to me as pearls of great price :

He is no scholar whose mind is  
not true to God. Be illumined !

Do you see what I see ? He, the  
Lord, has become everything.

Earnestness is the only thing  
necessary. Long must you  
struggle in the water before  
you learn to swim.

In the pure is reflected the Lord  
as the sun in clear mirror.

God shines when ego dies.

Like unto a miser that longeth for  
gold, let thy heart long for the  
Lord.

Call on the Divine Mother ! She  
will come to you and take you  
up in Her arms !

#### HARMONY OF RELIGIONS

Sri Ramakrishna discouraged sectarianism. It is the negation of the true spirit of religion. "Be not like the frog in the well," he said. He had respect for all religions. He saw the unity of Allah, Rama and Rahim. He respected the Quran and the Namaz. He meditated on the Madonna and Christ. He bowed his head at the name of Jesus, calling him "the master-yogi in eternal union with the Godhead."

#### THE WORLD'S NEW DAY

When I gaze at the picture of this  
God-intoxicated Man of the 19th century, I see the vision and promise of a new age—I behold the breaking down of barriers between religions and races—I see the unresting march of India beyond the bankruptcy of modern civilisation to a new life of simplicity and spiritual achievement.

Behold the beauty of this chosen  
Saint !

His tears were sweeter than all  
temple-songs ;

He served, he faltered not ; he did  
not faint,

And for the world's New Day his  
spirit longs !

## EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION

*By Mary Anita Ewer*

[Miss Ewer is the talented author of "A Survey of Mystical Symbolism," published in London by the S.P.C.K., in 1933. She tackles in this article a fundamental problem with which modern religious thought is concerned, viz., the reality of spiritual experience. Her point of view is that though the visions and other experiences of saints need not be taken as anything more than projections of familiar thought pictures, yet a study of their experiences, through the symbolical language they have used in order to describe these experiences, will reveal to us certain universal features regarding the nature of our spiritual environment.]

We would like to make in this connection the following suggestion : The various visions, forms, voices, etc., that mystics perceive need not be taken as trans-subjective facts. The real experience of the mystic is something deeper than these, and as to what it consists in, the present article gives a good deal of information from a study of comparative mysticism. Regarding the voices, visions, etc., they can be better understood if we compare them to the figures and language symbols that rise in a poet's imagination when he is to express a real psychic experience that evidently goes deeper than his expressions of it. Even as in the case of the poet, the mystic's visions, etc., are the symbolic expressions of a real inner experience, through the cultural and theological imageries familiar to the experiencing subject. Thus visions, etc., need not in themselves be considered spiritual experience but only as possible indication of it, and that also, when they are seen to satisfy the pragmatic tests of genuineness.]

**T**HE concerns which interest religious folk the world over might be classed roughly into two great groups, temporal concerns and eternal concerns. Among temporal religious interests might be listed such matters as the proper performance and oversight of ceremonials, the upkeep

of buildings and lands dedicated to religious purposes, matters of proper behaviour in all the affairs of life (these differ from country to country and from time to time), methods for the moral education of the young and for the relief and religious instruction of under-privileged classes in the community, and so forth. All these problems differ from religion to religion, from place to place, from age to age, for they involve no eternal principles, but merely the method of application of principles under varying local conditions. Intercourse between members of different religious bodies on these topics can be matter only for argument, usually by way of propaganda each for its own customs, though sometimes by way of imitation or adaptation of alien customs.

With eternal concerns of religion this is not true. There may be much dispute as to detailed methods of attainment, but certain deep principles and foundations and goals are common to all religions. On these there is a common field of real accord, whether the rank and file in different religious groups realise this fact or not. It is, furthermore, my considered opinion that this common field is very much more extensive and inclusive than is generally recognised, even by students, but that is a matter which I do not intend to discuss here. I am going to discuss rather in how far the testimony of religious geniuses, saints, mystics (of any and all religions), can assure us that religion, any religion, is more than a fairy-tale, a deception hatched in the tortuous by-ways of conscious or unconscious "wish-fulfilment."

Certain things are basic for religion the world over. One is that religion shall be a serious pursuit, not a pretence suitable only for small children, women, invalids, and maladjusted folk, or a mere matter for man's lighter moments, to be put away as he approaches the serious business of life. But how can we know that it is thus a serious matter? The authority of ancient traditions may be in error. The reasoning of spiritual-minded philosophers may be specious.

Faced by this question, many today turn toward the mystics of all religions for the answer. These, they say, have experienced. They can testify of that which they have known. This is an age of science, of experiment; and here is "experimental religion."

But alas for this refuge, the psychologist points out that each mystic reports the God he has been taught to worship. The physical explorer in a strange land finds the rivers, mountains, etc., that actually are there, whether he has expected to find those particular rivers and mountains or not. But the spiritual explorer finds the things he has been taught to expect. That is, if he is an orthodox Christian, he finds the Triune God, the saints, and the heaven of orthodox Christianity. If he is a Mohammedan, he receives an experience of Allah, in the imagery he has learned from his teachers. For example, there is a vision of God reported in the *Bhagavad Gita*. No Christian mystic would have received a vision of that type, and, if he had, it would scarcely have moved him to worship. Nor, on the other hand, would Arjuna have been moved to worship by the kind

of visions that have been reported by various Christian mystics.

What can all this show, asks the psychologist, except that the whole subject-matter of spiritual experience is illusion, born of expectation, wish-fulfilment, subconscious emotional set? Even within the confines of one religion, this same phenomenon can be shown. For example, some sects within Christianity teach their young people to expect and desire a spiritual experience, usually of a sudden and somewhat explosive character, called by them "getting the Spirit," "conversion," "getting assurance," "making a surrender," etc. A large percentage of the young people of these sects do go through such an experience, while very few young people of other sects manifest it, at least in any pronounced form, for these latter have been taught to expect a relatively smooth spiritual growth.

Since by evidence like this, *experience* can be shown to be, like *authority* and like *reason*, too frail a basis to support the structure of religion, some religious people urge upon us another type of "experimental religion," which they call the "venture of faith."

"For nothing worthy proving can be proven,

Nor yet disproven. Wherefore thou be wise,

Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,

And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith!"\*

But it is a vain attempt to try to surround with the halo of adventurous courage the natural human pre-

ference for the more agreeable of two contradictory non-proven propositions. The psychologist at once points out that the "venture of faith" only too often is really a "flight from reality" or a "search for security."

Thus, we are told, there is nothing in the foundations of religion save illusion. Reason is fallible. Experience is forever subject to illusion. Authority is untrustworthy, since somewhere and somehow it rests on someone's experience. The "venture of faith" and the whole pursuit of religion, as we see it, is based on a subtle self-deception. All is illusion.

Yes, I agree. I—who am a believing Christian, a "Catholic-minded" member of the Anglican Communion, and therefore one who prizes the traditions of the past, the theology of the Christian Fathers, the prayers and sacraments of the Christian Church—I agree that neither tradition nor reason gives a secure basis for faith, and that the "experience" of the mystic and the "venture of faith" of the believer are alike subject to illusion, and move within the fields of Maya.

What then? Is there nothing to be learned from and within illusion? Are we so sure that there is no foundation beneath shifting sands?

When the eye sees a stick partly immersed in water, it appears bent at the water surface. This is an optical illusion. That is, the visual experience gives no true information about the shape of the stick. Is it, therefore, a fruitless piece of knowledge? No, for it shows us a truth, not about water, nor sticks, nor eyes, but about the pathway of rays of light. Similarly, the mystic's report of experience, when examined not as

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\*From Tennyson's *The Ancient Sage*.

naive testimony, but as a spiritual *datum*, teaches far more than mere testimony could teach, even were that testimony free from illusion. For, when thus examined, it tells us more than the mere nature of one experience, the boundaries of one locus in the spiritual world. It teaches us concerning the nature of that spiritual world itself.

Until we reach sainthood, we shall never be able, during a concrete vision or a concrete spiritual experience, to distinguish surely between that which is fact and that which is illusion. (Even in the physical world, we distinguish fact from illusion not directly by the senses, but by a judgment beyond these.) Yet we do not need to wait for sainthood before learning certain of the laws of the spiritual world, provided only that we make ourselves familiar with the language of symbolism.

The mystics of all religions tell us that they have passed beyond the world of illusion into a world of reality, and that what they have experienced there is beyond all expression in human language. Having said this, as if that touch of the Eternal impelled them, they go on to use a wealth of symbolical language in the endeavour to express that which, they have just explained, is inexpressible. The symbols they use are analogies, shadowy projections of that which they attempt to picture. Yet if we examine their sayings with the question in our minds—of what kind of reality could this or that symbolic word-picture express some phase?—we will find in the end that we have more of a theology than we would have thought possible.

For example, mystics of all religions report that they have *seen* the Glory of the Lord, they have *heard* a Divine calling and a heavenly harmony, they have *smelled* a holy fragrance and *tasted* the goodness of the Lord, they have *felt* the touch of the Eternal. In these reports it is indeed true that the things seen and heard accord with previous belief, that the touch that is felt varies from deeply personal to highly impersonal, in accord with individual temperament and training. Yet these pictures show us that the world which the mystics have entered is an intelligible world (since there is vision within it), an orderly world (since it contains order and harmony), a world within which human beings can be joyful and at home (since they report goodness of smell and taste), and a world where they meet with that which is spiritually akin to them.

Again, mystics of all religions use various figures to express the development of the soul that is "growing in grace." Thus they speak of a spiritual journey or voyage, of climbing upward to spiritual heights, of fighting the good fight, of being transmuted by the touch of sacred things, of the growth of a spiritual plant, or of the progress of a spiritual romance. Now certainly we do ill to try to map out in space a geography of the spiritual world, to expect to find somewhere the dead bodies of enemies slain in spiritual warfare, or the like. But these pictures show us that the world the mystics have entered is not merely static; that it involves endeavour and fosters individual improvement; that it has its own standards by which its denizens live; that within it vital powers may be reached and

used in a way to transform the individual life ; that it is a realm of living and growing and loving.

It is such truths as these, and not a detailed geography of the spiritual realm, which the mystics have given us. And our mystics, whether of the East or of the West, all know and all tell us that the desire for, and search after, either a detailed geography or magical powers leads into nothing but self-deception and a deepening of illusion, never to the One Shining Light of Truth.

They tell us one thing more, and that is that no matter how separately we may seek the Truth, even if we choose to "wander alone like a rhinoceros," still, we individuals find the Truth not separately, but as One, and we find that we *are* One—One in a deeper sense than that of the conscious, voluntary fellowship and brotherhood which is never fully at-

tained, and which is broken so easily by our selfish failings.

The "experimental religion" which has a true basis is not primarily an individual thing. It is not a matter of an individual trying prayer, to see if it will be answered—trying goodness and faith, to see if they pay—setting conditions under which God, if there be a God, is to reveal Himself. Valid experimental religion is the discovery that the true center of the individual life is not individual ; that the true center of all our lives is one and the same, that this center is beyond our individual limitations even as the consciousness of the body is beyond the limited individual consciousness of each cell. Yet the cell lives by and in and because of the body; the cell can touch the consciousness of the body, identify itself with it, find its purpose, its real Self, within it.

## ONE YEAR IN SOUTH AFRICA

*By Swami Adyananda*

[Swami Adyananda of the Ramakrishna Mission gives his impressions of South Africa, where he had been for a year on a missionary tour.]

**I**N the comprehensive programme of work which Swami Vivekananda, the great patriot-saint of Modern India, suggested for the regeneration and revitalisation of Hinduism and India, one of the most important and ambitious items was missionary work in foreign lands. The great Swami knew fully well that India, in spite of her degraded political and economic conditions, had enough spiritual treasures still to distribute amongst the other nations of the world. And those who are ac-

quainted with the past history of India know perfectly well how in ancient times India played the role of a great spiritual teacher of the world at large, and influenced the thought, life and actions of the people of the different countries where her missionaries had entered. But since Hinduism, or the religion of the Vedas has always been universal in its outlook, the philosophical basis of its missionary movements and its method of procedure in such enterprises have been unique in many respects. It



has never shown any intolerant attitude towards any existing faith, nor has it tried to create any 'sphere of influence' for ultimate political or economic advantage. Its method has always been one of synthesis. However, when India discarded, owing to various circumstances, her great mission of flooding the world with spiritual idealism, and she became narrow in her outlook, her days of stagnation were ushered in. This, the Swami repeatedly pointed out in the memorable words, "Expansion is life; contraction is death." And the Swami himself, inspired by his Divine Master, carried once again in modern times India's spiritual message to distant foreign lands. Following the footsteps of the great leader, the Ramakrishna Mission has been carrying on the foreign work, especially in America. Up till now the Mission had no opportunities to send any preacher to Africa. But in 1933 a request came from the Hindus of Transval to the Mission for a preacher. I was deputed for the purpose. I stayed in South Africa for about a year. During my sojourn, I visited many important cities and lectured before European and Indian audiences, held classes, gave interviews and met many persons of light and leading in that sub-continent. Since the Gandhi-Smuts agreement in 1914, Indian Immigration has been totally prohibited. I received my permit of entry at the first instance for six months and afterwards it was extended for another six months.

South Africa is notoriously famous for colour prejudice. Colour counts a great deal in that country. In political, social and economic fields, colour is the main factor which decides

things. This is the general impression which a visitor from outside gets. But gradually one marks, after he or she has stayed there for some time, that a small public opinion is slowly growing amongst a minor section of the white population, against the colour prejudice. But its influence is very little up till now. The natives of Africa are the worst sufferers from colour. Next come the Asiatics. But the majority of the white population, especially the cultured amongst them, are ready to receive visitors from coloured countries and give them a cordial hearing. Personally I had not to experience much difficulty in meeting white audiences, except in one instance. The women's section of the *former* South African Party Club, of which General Smuts was the leader, invited me to speak on "Indian Women." I requested the secretary to allow two Indian friends to accompany me to the lecture. This was first agreed to by the secretary, but when I arrived at the Club premises, my companions were refused admission. In spite of my persuasion they were not allowed. I had to come off. This was the only occasion when I experienced the colour bias. The Indian Football Team that visited South Africa during the time I was there had not much experience of the colour bitterness also. Nevertheless, no white team played with the Indian team, though the Indian team had displayed great skill in every game they played. The colour question is a vast problem in South Africa. It includes within its victims the natives and all races, except the Europeans. Considering various phases, one may say that the position is improving. But I doubt

very strongly whether this evil will ever be totally eradicated from South Africa. If we venture to trace the root causes of the evil, we shall find so many contributory factors. However, it may be said to be the worst expression of the civilisation of the West.

Before I give a general impression of the position of Indians in this sub-continent, I may say that the South African population consists generally of four groups—(i) the Europeans or the white population, (ii) the natives or the Negroes, (iii) the Indians and (iv) the coloured or the Euro-Africans. The history of European colonisation of South African coast may be traced back to the fifteenth century with the historic voyage of Vasco da Gama. Since then, under different vicissitudes of history, the land has been conquered by the Portuguese and the Dutch, and in the end, after the Boer War and the Union Act of 1910, the Union of South Africa was formed a British Dominion. Before the Boer War, the Cape Province and the Natal were already British possessions. Since the Boer War, Orange Free State and Transvaal, which were then independent Dutch republics, were amalgamated with the two former states, and the Union Government was formed. Today South Africa as a whole enjoys 'sovereign independence,' since the passing of the Westminster Statute in the British Parliament and the Statute Bills of 1934 of the Union Parliament. For all practical purposes the country enjoys political freedom. Only it owes allegiance to the King as the King of South Africa.

The history of Indian immigration may be traced back to 1860 when the

first batch of indentured labourers arrived at Durban. In 1843 the British occupied Natal and the colonisers started sugar industry. Indians were recruited from India as cheap labourers for the plantations. Since the arrival of these labourers, gradually some small dealers had also entered the country. From the beginning Indians were not treated fairly, and they had to live under great disabilities. The history of the Indian struggle in South Africa is well known. But it received great impetus from Mahatma Gandhi who first experimented his doctrine of 'passive resistance' in that country to force the authorities to redress the injustice done to Indians there. It is not possible for me to enumerate here the different disabilities under which Indians live there. Politically they have no status. Economically and socially they are ostracised. In public institutions, as for instance, in post offices, trams, public libraries and cinemas, Indians cannot move on equal terms with the white population. In Orange Free State, Indians have no entrance. Indians cannot move from one province to another without permit. Except in Cape Province Indians have to live in segregated areas called "locations." In trade, Indians are often refused licences. However, since the agreement of 1926 between the Union Government and the Government of India, an agency has been started on behalf of the Government of India. Since then primary and secondary education has advanced rapidly amongst Indians. The Union Government is now making more liberal contributions for education amongst Indians in accordance with

the 'uplift clause' of the 1926 agreement. Roughly speaking about 80 per cent of Indian children of school-going age are attending schools.

The majority of Indians in the Union are still Hindus. But being cut off from their homeland for generations, most of them have no idea of their religion. They know very little about its teachings. But they are very enthusiastic to learn their religion. Many Arya Samaj preachers have visited the country but not much substantial work has been done. In the different cities which I visited, the Indians were very cordial and hospitable. In several places many expressed how they always felt the absence of any proper religious preacher. I hope, in course of time, some permanent religious institutions of India will find it possible to start work amongst the Hindus in South Africa.

Most of the Europeans in South Africa, I may say, are ignorant about Hinduism and India. Theosophical Societies are giving the people some ideas about Eastern philosophies, but they work within very limited groups. I shall narrate one incident which will give an idea of the general position. In the first public lecture which I delivered at Selbourne Hall, Johannesburg, I selected as my subject, "What India can teach the world?" About 600 distinguished European ladies and gentlemen attended the discourse. My main theme was to point out the influence of Indian thought in the different countries at different periods of world's history, and to show what the Hindus thought about the higher evolution of man. Naturally I mentioned about Buddha

and Buddhism in the course of my lecture. After my discourse I usually invite questions from my audience. When I did that, one gentleman got up and asked me, "What have the Indians done in the world? How many countries have they conquered?" When I tried to point out the spiritual mission of India, and the influence of Buddhism, the questioner straight away asked me whether Buddha was an Indian. This reveals the fact, how ignorant the average white man is about India. Most of the Europeans have formed an idea, that India is a land of poverty, dirt and disease, without any culture, religion or philosophy. There are, however, well-informed men and women here and there. There are many anxious to know and learn about Hinduism or the Vedanta philosophy. This was apparent from the large number of ladies and gentlemen in the different cities, who were interested in my lectures and attended them.

But to make any substantial progress in this line, it will take years of sustained work by worthy men, for the difficulties are many on the way. It is easily realisable what an amount of antagonism and opposition will have to be faced in a country where hatred of the Asiatic is the general law than the exception. Moreover, the Eastern and the Western minds sometimes appear to be so fundamentally opposite in working. While in Durban, I happened to be once in a mixed gathering of Indians and Europeans. Many distinguished persons were present. Naturally I had talks with many. Our conversation centered round the people of the East—especially of India. I tried to emphasise that spiritualising the outlook on life was

the solution of many problems facing humanity. Since science had brought the different races of this little planet of ours to closer contact in modern times by making better facilities for travel, I said that we could expect better understanding and more harmony only by recognising the spiritual value of life. This we were forgetting in modern times. "We are not practically applying the great maxim that man cannot live by bread alone," I added. There was a distinguished lawyer in our company, who immediately replied, "Yes, man cannot live by bread alone; he needs jam, jelly and butter on it!" Our small group burst into laughter. It may be our lawyer friend was not very serious about his ingenious interpretation of the well-known saying. It may, however, be said that the utterance reveals the general outlook of the western mind. It does not believe in a philosophy of renunciation or self-abnegation. On the contrary it considers renunciation as a sign of weakness and stagnation. But we know that without renunciation there can be no evolution of the higher self of man. And as long as man is ruled by the inner emotions of the lower self, there can be no progress. However, there are many seekers after truth in every country. And South Africa, though a new country, is no exception to this rule. We know that Vedanta as a universal philosophy, and its latest revelations through Ramakrishna-Vivekananda can be adapted to any clime. Only proper men are required for the work.

While in South Africa I had the opportunity of meeting some of the great men of the country. Amongst these I may mention the names of

General J. B. M. Hertzog, General J. C. Smuts, and Mr. Hofmeyr. All these distinguished gentlemen received me very kindly and I had interesting conversations with them. All of them showed great interest in India and her future. But the most interesting talk I had was with General Smuts. As is well-known, General Smuts is a world figure to-day. He is a distinguished statesman, scholar, administrator and philosopher. Our talk centered round generally on Eastern and Western philosophies of life and the advance of science and the future result of the closer contact between the East and the West. He appreciated Indian idealism, and thought that both the East and the West could benefit by mutual understanding and appreciation. The future of civilisation, he said, depended on this. When asked about the cardinal features of the Western philosophy of life, he pointed out that it was "individual liberty and freedom." But I pointed out that West had no sense of eternal value. The Western mind had not found anything which would stand the test of time. "Well," he remarked, "it is the freedom of man." But I pointed out that 'freedom of man' could not be a reality without subjective idealism. Creativeness and dynamism of the West, cut off as they are from higher spiritual background, could not bring freedom in the true sense of the term. Our conversation then turned upon India. He expressed great admiration for some of India's leaders. As I said already, he believes in India's future. But he remarked, as I have heard from many other Europeans, that we in India have emphasised too much on ideal-

ism and the result has been that we have lost creativeness, vigour and dynamism. The masses have thus been emasculated and lost their 'manliness.' I am inclined to think that there is much truth in his valuable remark. General Smuts has, however, to admit that the West requires a little bit of Eastern idealism.

From the interesting talk I had with General Smuts, I could see why he was considered one of the greatest men of the world to-day. The whole history of the world and everything about the current course of events in the different countries seemed to be at the tip of his fingers. Whether it was science, philosophy, or politics, he seemed to be the master of all. There is no doubt that his is a great master mind. In spite of his fame and high position in life, he was so cordial and free. In fact none of the officials whom I happened to meet had any official demeanour about them. They were so unostentatious and free. The spirit of service to the people was so much manifest in them. This I felt when I interviewed General J. B. M. Hertzog, the Prime Minister of the country. I shall fail in my duty if I do not pay high tribute to these officials for their individual greatness in this respect.

Many distinguished Europeans in South Africa are anxious to establish better relation between their country and India and Indians. Many professors and the general public appreciated very much my series of lectures on Hindu Philosophy at the University of Witwatersrand. Many opined that there should be regular cultural relations established through the universities. Whether this is possible in the near future or not, I do not know. But this will do great good both to India and South Africa. This will go a great way to mitigate the racial bitterness in a colour-ridden country. The Rt. Hon'ble V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, the first Agent-General of the Government of India in South Africa, had done a great deal to establish a better relation by presenting Indian philosophy and culture. And my humble work in one year, during which time I visited about one dozen important cities, and delivered over a hundred lectures has also been appreciated largely. Let us hope that the new and promising South Africa, the land of gold, diamond and natural beauty, and India, the motherland of philosophy, culture and civilization, will in future be more friendly through mutual appreciation and spiritual kinship.

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# SWETASWATARA UPANISHAD

By Swami Thyagisananda

## CHAPTER III

### Introduction

The third chapter gives a brief description of the Ultimate Principle behind the universe, so far as it could be intellectually grasped and verbally formulated. It reconciles the apparent conflict between the conceptions of Absolute Brahman and Iswara as well as that between Gnana and Bhakti. The Advaita doctrine is not in any way opposed to devotion to Personal God.

य एको जालवानीशत ईशनीभिः सर्वाल्लोकानीशत ईशनीभिः ।

य एवैक उद्भवे संभवे च य एतद्विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥

यः=who एकः=one एव=only उद्भवे=at the time of creation संभवे=at the time of dissolution च=and यः=who एकः=one जालवान्=by his inscrutable power of Maya ईशनीभिः=with innumerable powers ईशते=appears as the Divine Lord. सः=He ईशनीभिः=having innumerable forces working therein सर्वान्=all लोकान्=worlds ईशते=controls ये=who एतन्=this विदुः=know ते=they अमृताः=immortal भवन्ति=become

It is the self-same one, who exists alone at the time of creation and dissolution of the universe, that assumes manifold powers and appears as the Divine Lord by virtue of His inscrutable power of Maya. He it is that protects all the worlds and controls all the various forces working therein. Those who realise this Being become immortal. (1)

*Note.*—This verse speaks of the oneness of the Ultimate Principle in spite of its apparent diversity in functions. It also shows how the Divine Lord or God is nothing but this Ultimate Principle (the Absolute), appearing as active in the creation, maintenance and destruction of the universe by virtue of the power of Maya. This Maya, again, is shown to belong to Him. He is the Master of it and is not affected by it, just as a cobra is not affected by its own poison. All the forces that we see active in the universe are nothing but the manifestations of His Maya, and as such these forces can work only at His will and pleasure.

एकोहि रुद्रो न द्वितीयाय तस्थुर्य इमाल्लोकानीशत ईशनीभिः ।

प्रत्यङ् जनास्तिष्ठति संचुकोचान्तकाले संसृज्य विश्वा भुवनानि गोपाः ॥

यः=who इमान्=these लोकान्=worlds ईशनीभिः= By his own powers ईशते=protects and controls (सः=that) रुद्रः=Rudra एकः=one

हि = indeed द्वितीयाय = as a second being न तस्युः = did not stand हे जनाः = O men प्रत्यङ् = inside every being तिष्ठति = stands विश्वा = all भुवनानि = worlds संसृज्य = projecting गोपाः = protector (भूत्वा = being) अन्तर्काळे = at the end of time संवृकोच = withdrew unto Himself

He who protects and controls the worlds by His own powers, He—<sup>1</sup> Rudra—is indeed one only. There is no one beside Him who can make Him a second. O men, He is present inside the hearts of all beings. After projecting and maintaining all the worlds, He finally withdraws them into Himself. (2)

*Note.* 1. *Rudra*—This word is a synonym of Siva in later Puranic literature, but no such sectarian meaning is intended here. The word is used in its literal sense. The root meaning of the word is 'the destroyer of the sins and sorrows of devotees as well as the bestower of Jnana and bliss on them'. It also means, 'the punisher of those who break His laws, physical, moral and spiritual'. The word seems to be used here to hint that God as the indwelling self watches the deeds of men, good as well as bad.

विश्वतश्चक्षुरुत विश्वतोमुखोः विश्वतोबाहुस्त विश्वतस्यात् ।

स बाहुभ्यां धमति संपतत्रैश्चैवामृमी जनयन् देवं एकः ॥

(यद्यपि = though) द्यावा भूमी = heaven and earth जनयन् = creating देवः = God एकः = one only (तथापि = yet सः = he) विश्वतश्चक्षुः = the owner of all eyes विश्वतोमुखः = the owner of all faces विश्वतोबाहुः = the owner of all hands उत = and विश्वतस्यात् the owner of all feet (भवति = is) बाहुभ्यां = by means of two hands संपतत्रैः = by means of the bellows (सः = he) संधमति = fans the fire into flame or excites.

Though God, the Creator of heaven and earth, is one only, yet He is the real owner of all the eyes, faces, hands and feet in this universe. It is He who <sup>1</sup> inspires all of them to do their respective duties in accordance with the knowledge <sup>2</sup>, past actions and tendencies<sup>3</sup> of the various beings (with whom they appear to be associated). (3)

*Note.* 1. *Inspires*—As the indwelling self, it is God who really guides creatures in the use of all their senses. The exact meaning of the word *dhamati* is 'to fan a fire into flame.' It is used here metaphorically for kindling fire in the senses, i.e., to enlighten and inspire them. It shows how dependent we are on His grace for every one of our achievements.

2. *Knowledge, past actions*—This is the symbolic sense of the word *bahubhyam* according to the commentator Narayana. According to Mahidhara, the 'two hands' refers to Dharma and Adharma. These form, as it were, the two hands by means of which these senses are worked. It symbolically describes how the work of the senses in this life is dependent upon the knowledge and habits acquired by the individuals in past lives. It also implies

that the grace of God works only on the basis of man's self-effort. Thus it reconciles the conflict between divine grace and human responsibility.

3. *Tendencies*—The word *patatra* literally means 'wings or bellows for blowing fire,' but here it is used metaphorically for *vasanas* or tendencies, as noted by Narayana. The senses work only as guided by the *vasanas*.

यो देवानां प्रभवश्चोद्भवश्च विश्वाधिपो रुद्रो महर्षिः ।

हिरण्यगर्भे जनयामास पूर्वे स नो बुद्ध्या शुभया संयुतुक्तु ॥

यः = who देवानां = of the gods or senses प्रभवः = creator उद्भवः = supporter च = and विश्वाधिपः = the Lord of all रुद्रः = the destroyer of the sins and sorrows of the devotees, the bestower of wisdom and bliss and the punisher of all those who break His laws महर्षिः = the great seer हिरण्यगर्भे = the cosmic soul पूर्वे = in days of yore जनयामास = brought into being सः = he नः = us शुभया = good बुद्ध्या = with thoughts संयुतुक्तुः = may endow.

May He—the Lord of all, the <sup>1</sup> Great Seer—who created the <sup>2</sup> gods and supports them; <sup>3</sup> who confers bliss and wisdom on the devoted, destroying their sins and sorrows, and punishing all breaches of law; who is the origin also of the <sup>4</sup> Cosmic Soul—may He endow us with good thoughts. (4)

*Note.* 1. *Great Seer*—The word conveys the idea that He sees all the actions of men and is therefore in a position to apportion their rewards. That God is the eternal Subject is also implied.

2. *Gods*—the word *deva* means also 'senses'. As the indwelling self it is He who guides them. (*Vide* previous Mantra.)

3. *Who confers, etc.*—*Vide* the meaning of the word Rudra in the notes on the previous Mantra.

4. *Cosmic soul*—Universal intelligence. It is not too much for Him who has brought the universal intelligence into existence to give us good thoughts.

या ते रुद्र शिवा तनूरधोराऽपापकाशिनी ।

तया नस्तनुवा शन्तमया गिरिशंताभिचाकशीहि ॥

हे रुद्र = O Rudra गिरिशंत = who blesses all creatures through the Vedas या = what ते = your शिवा = calm अधोरा = not terrible अपापकाशिनी = rooting out sin तनुः = body or self तया = by that शंतमया = blissful तनुवा ॥ by the self अभिचाकशीहि = deign to make us happy.

O Lord<sup>1</sup>, who blesses all creatures by revealing the Vedas, deign to make<sup>2</sup> us happy by Thy calm and blissful self which roots out terror as well as sin. (5)

*Note.* 1. *Who blesses all creatures by revealing the Vedas*—The Vedas which give us an insight into the highest truth behind this phenomenal world are revealed only because of His grace and of His consideration for the welfare of His creatures. Had it not been for this, mankind would have remained



ignorant, as it is not possible even for a realised man to speak of his experience of the Absolute which is beyond word or thought.

2. *Us*—The plural number indicates that it is a prayer for the benefit, not merely of the individual, but of all beings.

यामिषुं गिरिशं हस्ते विमर्ष्यस्तवे ।

शिवां गिरि तं कुरु मा हिंसीः पुरुषं जगत् ॥

हे गिरिशं = O revealer of the Vedas यां = what इषुं = arrow हस्ते = in your hand विमर्षि = you hold अस्तवे = for shooting against somebody गिरि = O protector of devotees तं = that शिवां = propitious or auspicious कुरु = make पुरुषं = the divine person जगत् = who has manifested himself as the universe मा हिंसीः = do not destroy

O revealer of the Vedic truths, deign to make propitious that<sup>1</sup> arrow which thou<sup>2</sup> holdest in Thy hand for shooting at somebody. O protector of devotees, <sup>3</sup> do not destroy that benign personal form of Thine which has manifested as the universe. (6)

*Note.*—The Pranava or the mystic syllable 'Om,' here represented by the arrow, reveals the form of the chosen ideal. The Pranava means both the impersonal (Nirguna) and personal (Saguna) Brahman.

1. *The arrow*—refers to one of the Vedic Mahavakyas or the Taraka Mantra, i.e., the Pranava, which is the quintessence of the Vedas. These form the weapons of God for destroying ignorance.

2. *Hold in your hand*—This shows that the Lord is ever ready to reveal Himself unto His devotees if they repeat, and contemplate on the Pranava and Mahavakyas.

3. *Do not destroy, etc.*,—shows that the devotee likes to meditate on the personal aspects of God even after the realisation of the formless Absolute.

ततः परं ब्रह्म परं बृहन्तं यथानिकायं सर्वभूतेषु गूढम् ।

विश्वस्येकं परिवेष्टितारमीशं तं ज्ञात्वाऽमृतत्वमेति ॥

ततः = than that (the Personal Brahman) परं = higher बृहन्तं = infinite परं = supreme ब्रह्म = Brahman यथानिकायं = according to the bodies सर्वभूतेषु = in all beings गूढं = hidden विश्वस्य = of the universe एकं = single परिवेष्टितारं = enveloper ईशं = God तं = Him ज्ञात्वा = realising अमृतः = immortal भवन्ति = become

Higher than this Personal Brahman is the infinite supreme Brahman who is concealed in all beings according to their bodies, who, though remaining single, envelopes the whole universe. Knowing Him to be the Lord, they become immortal. (7)

*Note.*—Though the devotee would like to remain satisfied with the form of God, the highest Mukti is possible only by realising the Absolute. This verse therefore leads the aspirant from the Personal to the Impersonal. It must, however, be remembered that even after the realisation of the Absolute, there is nothing contradictory in retaining devotion to the Personal God.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### A Prudent and Humane Act

The ruler of Travancore has, on his twenty-fifth birthday, cheered his subjects and the people of India in general, by issuing a wise proclamation. No Hindu of whatever caste or community will henceforward be disqualified to enter and worship in any of the temples controlled by the Travancore Government and the ruling family of the State. Doubtless, this event will be chronicled in memorable words in the history of Travancore, and even of India as a whole. The sudden removal of one anachronistic custom has certainly paved the way for progress and union among the Maharajah's Hindu subjects. The generous Maharaja and his sagacious minister have earned the hearty congratulations of all lovers and well-wishers of Hinduism, and the everlasting gratitude of a very vast section of the State's population by this effective, bold and statesmanlike step.

We wish to transcribe here this important document for two reasons. First, for the large-heartedness and discernment at the back of it. Second, to indicate how Indian opinion is slowly veering round to the conception of Hinduism which Swami Vivekananda placed before us a few decades back. The proclamation runs :—

Profoundly convinced of the truth and validity of our religion, believing that it is based on *divine providence and all-comprehensive toleration*, knowing that in its *prac-*

*tice it has throughout centuries adapted itself to the need of the changing time*, solicitous that none of our Hindu subjects should by reason of birth or caste or community be denied the solace of Hindu faith, we hereby declare, ordain and command that subject to such rules and conditions as may be laid down and imposed by us for preserving their proper atmosphere and maintaining their rituals and observances there should be no restriction placed on any Hindu by birth or religion on entering or worshipping at temples controlled by us and our Government." (The italics are ours.)

About forty years ago, the great Swami Vivekananda, seized with a consuming fervour to resuscitate Hinduism, indefatigably dinned into the ears of all that social institutions are only an external appendage to religion ; that society outgrows old forms and puts on new ones ; and that the essence of religion is untouched by such changes. Social distinctions have no religious significance. This fact is reiterated here with the weight of a royal edict.

The caste spectrum of Malabar with its variegated hues did not escape the astute observation of Swami Vivekananda, whose summary description of the sickening sight, by calling the country a 'lunatic asylum', has ever since been on the lips of all who have anything to say against the matter. That blot is almost wiped away now, without injuring religion, by this act of reform that takes its stand on the two central principles of

Hindu religion, viz., its adaptability and its catholicity. Tradition-bound India still cherishes the dictum, "Sovereign shapes the time" (Raja Kalasya Karanam), repeated in the Mahabharata. And here is an example which may be followed similarly by others at the helm of the different States. In Travancore itself, we hope this measure is only a step in a far-flung religious revival that

will permeate down to the lowest rung of Hindu society, illuminating the darkest corners with the light of religion and inspiring the whole people with a sense of unity based upon a cultural consciousness. This is not an impossible wish for a State that has thousands of living temples with a plentiful income, and an enlightened young sovereign at the head of affairs.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**The Philosophy of Religion versus the Philosophy of Science:** By Albert Eagle. Published by Simpkin Marshall, Ltd., Stationers' Hall Court, London, E.C. 4.

This book, primarily meant for private circulation, is a spirited denunciation of the materialistic tendencies and conclusions of modern sciences. Himself a physicist and mathematician, the author has been pained to see the soul-deadening effect of the present day scientific education, and feels himself called upon to demolish the erroneous conclusions that are presented in the name of science. He suggests certain hypothesis which he believes will better explain the data of sciences, keeping to a spiritual view of the universe. He has little or no quarrel with the accepted data of scientific investigation, but only with the theories that have been wrongly built upon these facts.

The author has also put forth a number of hypotheses which he considers to be scientific necessities. These include the postulates of a non-electron and non-proton matter, interpenetrating the same space as electronic-protonic matter. With this super-matter is made the duplicate non-material bodies of all living organisms. On the basis of this theory the author explains the birth and growth of organisms, the evolution of species and the survival of agents after death. It seems rather curious that he accepts re-incarnation in the case of sub-human species but not in that of human beings. While many of his conclusions are thought-provoking, it has to

be opined that there are a good many contradictions, unnecessary hypotheses and digressions in the book.

**These Mysterious People:** By Nandor Fodor, L.L.D. Published by Rider & Co., Paternoster House, Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4. Price 7/6 net.

This book deals with very mysterious things. Dr. Fodor, author of the Encyclopedia of Psychic Science, presents in story form an examination of twenty-four recognised mediums of Europe, "true stories which vie in fascination with the most popular thrillers." Spiritualism came into prominence as a challenge to the pretensions of scientific materialism which banished God and theology, and shocked people out of popular superstitions. Scientists sharing the prejudice of the times came out to investigate. The "controlled" experiments conducted by them helped spiritualism to be salvaged substantially from necromancy and magic, and thus forced its various phenomena to be seriously considered as valuable data for research. Men exercising great influence on the thought world supported the claim for the existence of discarnate spirits, for a connection set up between this world and the next.

Sir William Crooks, Sir Oliver Lodge, Prof. Charles Richet—a Nobel Prize man for physiology, Dr. Hodgson, and Dr. Alfred Wallace—co-discoverer with Darwin of the principle of natural selection, gave amazing testimony to the claims of honest spiritualists. Many of them started their connection with psychical research as verita-

ble crusaders and fraud hunters ; but they who came to scoff remained to pray. But what all the 19th century has said for spiritualism has to be taken now with a pinch of salt. The modern experimental psychologist steps in as a disturbing factor. He has discovered that the scientist is as much entrenched in prejudices as the layman. The superstitions of the laboratory are not very much different from those of folklore so long as lay-men and scientists are ignorant of their own psychic constitution. The subjective outlook influences conclusions in definite form, and in the wonderland of the subconscious realm there are many uncharted areas wherein, perhaps, many of the abnormalities find easy solutions. Dr. Fodor has not considered this aspect of the question in any of his criticisms.

There is a claim set up by spiritualists that their researches inspire more confidence in God and a spiritual ordering of the universe. Spiritual phenomena, even if proved real, cannot raise the vision of mankind to the consciousness of a spiritual foundation of life. For they still deal with the phenomenal universe and the Noumenal which is supersensuous cannot be known through mediums and seance rooms. The mystery of this manifested manifold, which we call the universe, cannot be explained through causal laws and relations.

Another claim advanced by spiritualists is that the recognition of the continuance of personality would enliven the moral conscience of mankind. But the basis of this morality lies in fear. Fear can at no time fashion an enlightened vision of the universe. True understanding alone can reveal the Law which is Truth and Wisdom. In freedom flower moral excellences. Any other basis of morality will not have universal application. Sri Ramakrishna insisted on his disciples to steer clear of all psychic phenomena, if one is truly bent on spiritual realisations. Spiritualism sidetracks us from true spiritual striving. In the finer sense-world we are under the finer grip of lust, greed and power—the gateways to spiritual downfall. Psychical researches are explorations in sense world. But unless one develops the Avritta Chakshu, the interiorised vision, the hunger for spiritual satisfaction will ever remain. Psychical researches take men's interests

away from the true focii of spiritual development. It may bring knowledge of the world, but not wisdom of the sages.

By this we do not minimise the contribution of the mediums to the development of scientific knowledge. Science may one day vindicate spiritualism, but mediums and seance rooms cannot make men spiritual. Our criticism is just meant to give this warning to spiritual aspirants, and not to disparage the present book which has its own value both to the scientist and the common man.

The book is profusely illustrated, and makes very interesting reading.

**Prapanchasara Tantra. Parts 1 & 2 :**  
*Edited by Arthur Avalon. (Sanskrit.) Published by Agamanusandhana Samiti, 7-A, Chaltabagan, Calcutta. Price Rs. 9. Pages LXXIII & 692.*

The ritualistic theology of the Tantras is one of deep interest, especially because of its practical discipline and its synthetic outlook. Thanks to the sympathetic labours of the late Sir John Woodroff, known also by his pen-name Arthur Avalon, much of the mystery associated with the system has been dispelled, and it has become possible for disinterested minds to arrive at a correct estimate of this large body of Hindu religious literature. *Prapanchasara* is the latest of the Tantric texts edited by Sir John. This 2nd edition of the work distinguishes itself by its typographical excellence, by an introduction which gives in English a precis of the text, and two original commentaries, one of which is from the pen of Padmapadacharya, a direct disciple of the author of the work, Sri Sankaracharya. Being one of the earliest works, this Tantra has been freely and authoritatively drawn upon by later writers. Worship of the five important deities, Vishnu, Mahesvara, Devi, Aditya and Ganapati, forms the theme of the work along with some passing reference to some points of astrology and medicine. Some of the purely Vedic rites like the Pranagni-hotra have received emphatic treatment. Anyone wishing to be acquainted with the path of temporal prosperity and spiritual bliss as chalked out in the Tantras has here a handy manual, brief, authoritative and arranged in order.

**Prem-darsan or Bhakti-sutras of Narada:** (Hindi) Published by Gita Press, Gorakhpore. Pages 206. Price 6 as.

In the limited range of 84 clear-cut 'sutras', radiant with a peculiar aroma of Divine love, Narada throws valuable suggestions about the nature, scope, obstacles, means, and advantages of the discipline of devotion and fervent love for God. He fearlessly delivers to the world, with a ring of assurance, the quintessence of the glorious devotional mysticism so luminously depicted on the pages of the Puranic and Pancharatra works. This precious gem of devotion, effectively set in a string of arresting quotations culled from numerous devotional works, accompanied by a Hindi

translation and a lucid explanation, all so naturally in tune with the Sutras, has been published now at a nominal price from the Gita Press. The book is sure to win a glad welcome at the hands of all lovers of devotional literature.

(1) *L' Homme Reel et L' Homme Apparent.* (2) *Jnana Yoga: By Jean Herbert. To be had of Adrien Maisonneuve, 11 Rue Saint-Sulpice, Paris.*

These are the French translations of Swami Vivekananda's (1) *My Master and The Real and the Apparent Man* and (2) *Gnana Yoga*. Mr. Jean Herbert, the translator, deserves the thanks and gratitude of all lovers of Vedantic literature for the excellent work he has done.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Obituary Note

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the sad demise of two senior monks of the Ramakrishna Order, namely, Swamis Kamaleswarananda and Dhirananda. Of these, Swami Kamaleswarananda, who passed away on the 24th October, was a good Sanskrit scholar, and as the head of the Gadadhara Ashram, did much to promote Vedic studies by starting a Veda Vidyalaya and publishing many Vedic hymns with Bengali translations.

While this bereavement is still fresh in our minds is conveyed the sad news of the demise of Swami Dhirananda on the 22nd November. He was one of the earliest persons to join the Order, and was a disciple of Swami Vivekananda. As a trustee of Belur Math and a member of the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission, he lived a very active and useful life, serving the cause of his Great Master and the public at large.

May these blessed souls find peace and rest at the feet of Him, to whose service their lives were dedicated!

### The Activities of the Medical Centres of the Ramakrishna Mission

(1) *Benares*—The Ramakrishna Mission Home of service has been pushing up its activities every year, and it might be said

to the credit of it that in 1935 a new laboratory has been opened and the construction of the Womens' Invalids' Quarters at an estimated cost of Rs. 40,000 has been taken up. The total receipts of the institution for the reported year was Rs. 54,848-4-5 and the disbursements column shows an expense of Rs. 56,443-8-4, of which Rs. 25,901-4-11 are in investments. The total number of patients treated according to Allopathic, Homeopathic and Ayurvedic systems, for which there is efficient provision, has been 54751, of which 1644 were indoor patients. The solicitude shown in providing refuge for invalids and paralytics is a striking example of the spirit of service the Home has been fostering all along.

(2) *Brindaban*—To enhance the usefulness of the Sevasram here and to give permanence to its activities the management has issued an appeal for funds towards the construction of a surgical ward, a guest house, an embankment and landing ghat as well as the founding of a permanent fund. In spite of the handicaps, however, the Sevasram has been able to treat in the year 1935 out-door patients numbering 12,143. The number of in-door cases was 334. The total income for the year has been Rs. 9,871-10-6 of which Rs. 9,161-12-9 were spent for the running of the institution. Persons desiring to perpetuate the memory of beloved rela-

tives or friends have an opportunity to do so by contributing towards any of the stated needs. Remittances will be thankfully received and duly acknowledged by the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevasram, Brindavan, Dt. Muttra.

(3) *Hardwar*—This philanthropic institution has been for the last 35 years one of the outposts of the mission to mitigate the suffering of the sick poor, often religious mendicants, resorting to the places of pilgrimage in the Himalayas. 9,729 patients were treated here in 1935, of which 551 cases were treated in the indoor department. There is also a small library and a night school run by this institution for the benefit of the local people. The receipts for the year was Rs. 11,558-7-3 and expenses Rs. 7,850-15-6. Since the work of the Sevasram is expanding, a guest-house, a waiting house, a permanent endowment fund, a general maintenance fund and a fund for the library, temple and the branch Sevasram at Hrishikesh have become necessary. Any contribution, however small, for any of the above purposes will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Sevasram, P.O. Kankhal, U.P.

(4) *Syamala Tal*—The 21st report of this Sevasram gives a total number of 2,968 patients coming mostly from hill-people. 12 of these were in-patients. A benevolent provision for treating diseased dumb cattle is a distinctive feature of this centre. The Secretary places before the sympathetic public the urgent need for a permanent fund of not less than Rs. 10,000 to place this noble and selfless work among the destitute hill-people in the mountain fastness on a solid footing.

(5) *Tamluk*—The mission Sevasram here has been serving the needs of the local population in its own humble way ever since 1914. The indoor section has only 6 beds. In 1935 cases numbering 63 were treated in this section. 1106 cases were treated in the out-door section. Besides, the Ashram does work of service as nursing patients in their homes, distributing rice to the indigent, clothes and cash to extremely needy persons, flood and cholera relief, conducting religious classes and the running of a small library.

(6) *New Delhi*—The free tuberculosis clinic in Delhi is a recent venture of just three years' standing. But the progress it has been able to achieve within this period attests to the importance and value of the work, especially in the city where expert opinion declares that hardly a family is free from tuberculosis affection. In 1933 only 87 patients were attended to, while in 1935 persons numbering 477 received treatment. The usefulness of the work is increasingly felt as is evident from the fact that Rs. 3,421 have been collected for the purpose in 1935 as against the amount of Rs. 381 got in 1933. The clinic needs a house of its own and other hospital equipments such as Ultra-Violet Ray Apparatus, etc.

(7) *Lucknow*—Here there is an outdoor dispensary run by the mission, which, from January 1933 to December 1934, treated 87,911 repeated cases and 32,143 new cases. Besides monetary relief to widows and orphans and other temporary help costing Rs. 590-1-9, a night school, a reading room and a students' home (over which Rs. 390 was spent in the reported year) form the important features of this centre.

(8) *Narayan-ganj*—The report for 1933-1934 shows that the Sevasram at Narayan-ganj collected Rs. 1,347-2-10, and 104 seers and 13 maunds of rice for conducting its activities. The main work of the centre is a charitable dispensary which served 18,434 patients including repeated cases with medicine during this period. There is also a library, a free-reading room and a students' home.

(9) *Midnapore*—The mission Sevasram here has been rendering medical aid to the poor sick in the villages in this area and doing relief during small-pox epidemic. During the three reported years 105 corpses of the extremely destitute were cremated. An elementary school, a students home and a library are being conducted by the Sevasram.

### Sri Ramakrishna Centenary in Madras

A public meeting, attended by many prominent citizens of Madras, was held on 1st November 1936 at 4-15 p.m., in the

Ramakrishna Mutt's premises, Mylapore, to concert measures for the centenary celebrations, with Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar, K.C.S.I., in the chair. Five important resolutions were moved and adopted: (1) The celebrations be held in the City of Madras for one week from 21st to 27th February 1937. (2) Arrangements be made to hold the celebrations in different parts of the city, one day being allotted for each group of division. (3) A celebration committee be formed of the signatories to the requisition to the public meeting, with power to co-opt others. (4) The following office-bearers be appointed: *Presidents*—Swami Saswatananda; *Vice-Presidents*—Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar of Chettinad, Kt., Sir P. S. Sivaswami Aiyar, K.C.S.I.; Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer, K.C.I.E.; Sir K. V. Reddi Nayudu, K.C.S.I.; Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Iyer, Kt.; Sjt. C. Rajagopalachariar. *Secretaries*:—Kumararaja of Venkatagiri; Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastriar, C.I.E.; Dewan Bahadur N. Gopalswami Iyengar, C.I.E.; Rao Bahadur V. Thiruvengudathan Chettiar; Rao Sahib Dr. U. Rama Rao; and Sri. C. R. Srinivasan. *Joint Secretary and Treasurer*:—Rao Bahadur C. Ramaswamiachariar. (5) An Executive Committee be formed with powers to add new members. The number of gentlemen on the Committee is pretty large and includes many important citizens of Madras. The Executive Committee first met on the 8th November 1936.

### Centenary News

Arrangements for the Parliament of Religions are proceeding. Response has been received from Japan in the shape of an offering from Mr. Gaku Matsumoto, president of the Nippon Cultural Federation of Tokio, to represent Shintoism in the Parliament of Religions to be held in Calcutta either in person or through a delegate. Messrs. Lloyd Triestino Co of Italy, a great shipping concern, has decided to grant a general reduction of fares for delegates to the same Parliament of Religions, sailing from any Italian port. Rome has celebrated the centenary, on which occasion Prof. G. Tucci spoken on "Universalism of Ramakrishna's Message."

With a view to popularise the story of the divine life of Sri Ramakrishna among the unlettered; some forty slides depicting

the various phases of the Master's life, have been prepared through some expert artists. The Ladies' Sub-Committee for the celebration of the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna met at Calcutta with Maharani Jyotirmayee Devi of Nadia and an All-India Ladies' Conference was settled to be held subsequent to the Religious Parliament i.e., from 8th to 10th March 1937.

In pursuance of the general scheme of the Centenary it has now been settled to hold an *Exhibition* of Indian Arts, Industries and Culture in a convenient park in Calcutta for the whole month of February. Religious, Cultural, Artistic and Industrial sections of the above exhibition will endeavour to give a historical view of the manifold evolution of our past through original relics or photographic representations.

Decision has also been arrived at with regard the establishment of an Institute of Culture and a Panchavati at Belur Math towards the concluding period of the celebrations. The Pilgrim Sub-Committee has fixed the 28th and 29th December as the date for the pilgrimage to Jayrambati and Kamarpukur, for which, if necessary, a special train will be arranged.

At Berhampore and Chatiapur, Swami Ghanananda lectured on the significance of the Master's life and the centenary, and evoked much enthusiasm among the public. Sub-Committees have been formed with some of the most prominent citizens of the locality in order to make collections for the central fund and local celebrations. Funds are also being collected for a permanent memorial in Chatiapur.

### Cyclone Relief

The great havoc caused by the recent cyclone in Telugu country is now widely known through the daily papers. Soon after the cyclone had taken place, the Mission started relief work at Chirala, one of the worst affected areas. Three Swamis from the Madras Ramakrishna Math are at present in the afflicted area for organising relief operations. Hitherto 56 looms and housing material consisting of 3,000 bamboos and 40,000 leaves have been purchased and are being distributed at Chirala. Urgent relief is needed at Vetapalem also. If the work is to be finished satisfactorily, at least a sum of Rs. 10,000 will be required. Contributions from the generous public, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the President, Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

शौचाचारस्थितः सम्यग् विधसाशी गुरुप्रियः । नित्यव्रतः सत्यपरः स वै ब्राह्मण उच्यते ॥

सत्यं दानमयाद्रोह आतृशंस्यं क्षमा घृणा । तपश्च दृश्यते यत्न स ब्राह्मण इति स्मृतः ॥

क्षत्रजं सेवते कर्म वेदाध्ययनसंगतः । दानादानरतिर्यस्तु स वै क्षत्रिय उच्यते ॥

कृषिगोरक्ष्यवाणिज्यं योविशत्यनिशं शुचिः । वेदाध्ययनसम्पन्नः स वैश्य इति संज्ञितः ॥

सर्वभक्ष्यरतिर्नित्यं सर्वकर्मकरोऽशुचिः । त्यक्तवेदस्त्वनाचारः स वै शूद्र इति स्मृतः ॥

शूद्रे चैतद् भवेच्छुद्धं द्विजे सच्च न विद्यते । न वै शूद्रो भवेच्छूद्रो ब्राह्मणो न च ब्राह्मणः ॥

सर्वोपायैस्तु लोभस्य क्रोधस्य च विनिग्रहः । एतत् पवित्रं ज्ञातव्यं तथा चैवात्मसंयमः ॥

नित्यं क्रोधाम श्रियं रक्षेत तपोरक्षेच्च मत्सरात् । विद्यां मानवमानाभ्यामात्मानं तु प्रमादतः ॥

शौचेन सततं युक्तः सदाचारसमान्वितः । सातुक्रोशश्च भूतेषु स द्विजातिषु लक्षणम् ॥

The Brahmin is firmly rooted in cleanliness and well-doing ; habitually he partakes of his food after offering it to God and sharing it with guests ; he is devoted to the preceptor and lives under life-long vows ; to him truth is higher than all else, and he is endued with veracity, charity, harmlessness, forbearance, compassion and power of concentration. The Kshatriya lives for the oppressed, valorously ; he applies himself for the acquisition of sacred wisdom and fills his coffers only to give away to the needy. The Vaisya keeps himself pure, pursuing cultivation, cattle-rearing and trade, and enriching himself with wisdom. The Sudra rejects the scriptures, eats every food day after day, accepts any work and conducts himself meanly. Whatsoever be the parentage of a man, he is a Brahmin or Kshatriya or Vaisya or Sudra according as he is characterised. By every means one should hold oneself back from wrath and greed. It must be known that this along with self-control contributes to purity. Wealth must be guarded from anger ; rivalry should not crop up in the practice of penance ; neither pride nor contempt should canker learning ; and the mind should always be wide awake. A regenerate man is to be known by his perfect cleanliness, and through his gentlemanliness and all-embracing sympathy.

Mahabharata Santi Parva, Ch. 187, verses 3—9, 11 & 18.



# SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

By Swami Saradananda

[Swami Saradananda was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. "Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master" is a close translation of the Swami's well-known Bengali work on the Master, which is one of the most authoritative and exhaustive sources of information on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. In this section we get an account of Swami Tota Puri who initiated the Master into the mysteries of Advaita Vedanta.]

## *Srimat Swami Tota Puri*

**T**OTA PURI was a very stalwart figure. He could still all the waves of the mind, and hold it steady in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. He had acquired this power as a result of practising meditation in solitude for long forty years. Nevertheless, he would spend much time in meditation and Samadhi every day. The Master would often refer to him by the name, 'the naked one,' as he was in the habit of living naked like a child, and for the special reason that a pupil should not utter the name of the Guru very often and address him by his name. The Master told us that Tota Puri would never live in a room. As he belonged to the Naga Order of monks, he would always keep a fire by his side. The monks of this Order consider fire to be very sacred; hence wherever they may be living, they collect fuel and keep a fire burning by their side. This fire is usually called *Dhuni*. The Naga monks perform the ceremony of waving the light both morning and evening before their sacred fire, and take their meal consisting of what they receive as alms, only after it has been offered to it. Accordingly, while living at Dakshineswar, Tota Puri used to take his seat under a tree in the *Panchawati*, and keep the *Dhuni* burning near by. Whether there was

rain or sunshine, Tota's *Dhuni* would be blazing all the same. He would take his meal or go to sleep invariably by its side. And again, at dead of night, when, like a child in the arms of its mother, the whole world forgets all cares and anxieties and remains enfolded in the bosom of sleep—the bestower of rest—Tota Puri would trim his fire, sit up on his seat with the steadiness of a rock and merge himself in Samadhi, with his mind steady like a flame protected from wind. In the day-time also he would often remain absorbed in meditation, but only in such a manner as not to be observed by any person. That was why he was often found to be lying prostrate like a corpse by his fire, covering his body from head to foot with a sheet of cloth. People would take him to be sleeping.

## *Interchange of ideas between the Master and the Puri*

A water vessel, a pair of long tongs, and a piece of deer-skin to sit on,—these were the only things that Tota Puri would keep with him. He was in the habit of covering himself always with a thick sheet of cloth. His water vessel and tongs were daily rubbed and burnished, so that they would be always shining. Observing his regular practice of meditation every day, the Master went so far as

to ask him once, "You have realised Brahman and attained perfection. Why do you still practise meditation every day?" Tota Puri calmly looked at the Master, and then pointing to his water vessel with his finger, said, "Do you see how bright it looks? But if I do not scour it daily, will it not lose its lustre? It is the same with the mind too. It too gets impure if it is not kept clean by the regular practice of meditation." The Master's acute intellect admitted the truth of his Guru's utterance. Yet he argued, "But, what in case the pot be made of gold? Would it then lose its lustre?" "True, indeed," Tota admitted with a smile. These words of Tota, regarding the benefit of the regular practice of meditation, were ever present in the Master's memory, and many a time he repeated them to us citing his authority. And we believe that the Master's comment, that a golden pot does not fade, was indelibly impressed in Tota's mind too. He understood that the Master's mind was as bright as a golden pot. This kind of mutual interchange of ideas between the Guru and the disciple used to take place from the very beginning.

*The Knower of Brahman is free  
from bondage and fear*

The Vedānta declares that man can rid himself of all fears, only when he has realised Brahman; there is no other way to attain complete freedom from fear. Very true, indeed. For, how can a person be subject to fear when he has come to know that he is no other than the undivided Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, eternally pure and enlightened by nature,—the All-pervading Atman beyond birth

and death? What on earth can cause fear in one who actually perceives that his self is identical with the all-pervading, undecaying, immortal One—the Sat-Chit-Ananda whose nature is eternally pure and self-luminous. Such a soul perceives at all times and under all circumstances, be it in the state of activity or inertia, waking or sleep, that he is identical with the Indivisible Existence - Knowledge - Bliss; that he always pervades all persons and objects; that he is beyond the limitations of work or play, sleep or waking, want or inertia, joy or sorrow, birth or death, past or future, in short, of all that a man feels with the five senses or thinks or imagines through his mind and intellect. This is the form of realisation described in the scriptures as the culmination of the path of negation leading to the immediate intuition of the all-filling Atman. To have this knowledge of the Atman, at all times without any break, is what is called 'being established in knowledge,' which brings in its wake freedom from all forms of bondage. The Master would say that when an ordinary soul becomes fully established in this state of knowledge, his body lasts only for twenty-one days, after which it drops off like a withered leaf, and the soul does not return to this world any more with the limited ego. Jīvanmuktas, or the souls that have attained liberation even while alive, occasionally rise to this state of knowledge, and have self-realisation for short periods at first. Gradually they become fully established in this plane, and their vision of the Self continues undisturbed. And the eternally free 'Isvara-Kotis' (or souls belonging to the inner circle of God), who are born in this world only for establishing

certain truths for the good of the many.—they too from their very childhood occasionally rise up to this plane for a short while, and after the fulfilment of their mission become permanently established in this consciousness. And finally, there are the incarnations of God, whose extraordinary spiritual powers have always puzzled the world about their real nature—whether they are the manifestations of God Himself come down in human form for the good of humanity, or whether they are only men with superhuman powers. These incarnations can, from the very earliest period of their lives, rise at will to this state of perfect knowledge, remain in it as long as they please, and again come down to this world, the haunt of birth and decay, joys and sorrows, etc., for the good of all beings.

*The great spiritual eminence reached  
by Tota Puri*

The Master's teacher, Srimat Tota Puri, had attained to the state of a Jivanmukta (liberated soul)—a state which we have described in the above-mentioned grades of spiritual eminence—in consequence of his austere spiritual practices for forty years. Hence it was that all his activities were not like those of ordinary men. Like the ever-free air he would wander about unobstructed, wherever he pleased ; like the air he remained ever unaffected by the virtues and vices of the world ; and like the air again, he would not stay at one place for a long time. For, we have heard from the Master that he would not live for more than three days at any place. Nevertheless, he was compelled to remain at Dakshineswar for eleven months at a stretch on

account of the wonderful attractive power of the Master. What a fascinating personality he possessed !

*Tota's fearlessness : The Vision  
of Bhairava*

The Master had narrated to us various incidents showing the fearlessness of Tota Puri. The following is one of them : Once, at dead of night, Tota was preparing to sit for meditation after trimming the *Dhuni* fire. The whole of Nature was hushed in silence. No sound of any kind was audible, save the monotonous chirping of crickets and the occasional solemn screeches of owls from the temple tower. Even the wind was motionless. Suddenly the branches of the Panchavati began to tremble. A tall human figure came down from a tree. Fixing his gaze on Tota, he advanced towards him with leisurely steps and sat by the *Dhuni*. Surprised at the sight of another nude figure like himself, Tota enquired of him who he was. "I am the heavenly being called Bhairava," he replied, "I live on that tree for the protection of this holy place." "All right," said Tota, without being the least afraid, "you are the same as myself, both being but different manifestations of Brahman. Now, come on. Let us sit for meditation." At this the figure burst into laughter, and vanished in the air, as it were. And without being the least distracted by this incident, Tota engaged himself in his usual meditation. Next morning he spoke to the Master about the incident, whereupon the Master said, "True, he stays there. I too have seen him on many an occasion. At one time he informed me about some future events too. Once the Government tried to acquire the whole plot

where the *Panchavati* is situated, for the powder-magazine. This made me extremely sorry. For, away from the din and bustle of the world, in that lonely place, I would sit for my prayers—and I was going to be deprived of this privilege. Mathur engaged vigorously in law-suits against the Government on behalf of Rani Rasmani. During those days, once I saw the Bhairava perched on a tree, and he told me through gestures that the Government would not win the law suit and would fail to acquire the plot. The prediction came true."

#### *The Guru of Srimat Tota Puri*

We never heard from the Master what part of the western provinces was exactly the birth-place of Tota Puri. Perhaps the Master too did not think it necessary to ask him about such information. Moreover Sannyasins do not reply to queries about their former name or address or the family they belonged to. For, it is said that to put such questions to a Sannyasin, and for him to reply to them, are both prohibited by the scriptures. This may be the reason why the Master never asked Tota Puri about these details. But after the passing away of the Master, his monastic disciples, who belong to the Belur Math, came to know from old monks, in the course of their wanderings, that Tota Puri was probably born somewhere in the Punjab. His Guru, who was himself also a famous Yogi, lived at Leudhiana near Kuruksetra, where a monastery was established either by him or by someone else in the line of his Gurus. It is known that Tota Puri's Guru had been the abbot of that monastery, and in his honour an annual fair is

held there by the people of the surrounding villages. As he was in the habit of smoking, the villagers offer tobacco at his grave at the time of the fair, even to this day. After the demise of his Guru, Tota Puri was installed as the head of the monastery.

#### *Tota Puri on his Guru and his Order of Sannyasins*

It also appears from the words of Tota Puri that even from his very childhood he received instructions in Vedanta from his Guru, who was the head of an order of Sannyasins, and that, living under him for a long time, he studied the scriptures and learned the secrets of spiritual practice. For, as he told the Master, there were seven hundred monks in their Order, who would daily practise meditation under the guidance of his Guru for the realisation of the Vedantic truths in their own lives. He also gave the Master some hints about the excellent method of training followed in their Order, which the Master would often mention before us either as mere stories or by way of instruction. He used to say: "The 'naked one' said that there were seven hundred ascetics in their Order. Those who had just begun to learn meditation were made to sit on soft cushions; for, a hard seat will pain the legs, and the mind, unaccustomed to this kind of inconvenience, will be directed to the body instead of going Godward. Gradually, as they gained the capacity to enter into deeper and deeper states of meditation, they were made to sit on harder and harder seats. Finally they were to sit on pieces of skin only, or on the bare ground even. Similar discipline was observed with regard to food and other matters as well. As for dress,

they were gradually taught to live naked. As a human being is bound down from the very birth with the eight-fold bonds of suspicion, shyness, hatred, fear, caste, family, custom, and disgust, these monks were taught to renounce them one by one. When they had gained the power to keep the mind steady in meditation, they were to wander about in places of pilgrimage, at first in the company of other monks, and finally all alone. Such were the forms of discipline followed by them." The Master had also heard about their method of selecting a Head for the Order, which he incidentally narrated to us one day as follows: "When the post of the *Mahant* (the Head of a monastery) would fall vacant, all the monks together would select from among themselves such a person as had truly risen to the state of a *Paramahansa* (man of high spiritual enlightenment) to fill this vacancy. Otherwise, how would it be possible for an ordinary man to keep himself steady without losing his mental balance when he is in possession of wealth, honour and power? That was why the control over the cash would be entrusted to him alone

who had truly rid his mind of all desire for gold. For, he alone is capable of properly utilising the money in the service of God and the monks."

### *The early days of Tota Puri*

From the information given above regarding the early life of Tota Puri, it becomes quite obvious that from his very childhood he was brought up under the loving care of his Guru, in a heavenly environment as it were, far away from the world with its ignorance and illusion, its hatred and jealousy. There is a custom in vogue in the north-western parts of India, that when a married couple do not get any issue, they go to some holy place and pray to God for children, and make a vow that they would give away their first-born child to a *Sannyasin*, to be engaged in the service of God; and they do actually act accordingly when a child is born to them. Was Tota Puri a child handed over to his Guru in this fashion? Who knows? Anyway, that is our inference from the fact that he had never mentioned to the Master anything about his family.

## A CRITIQUE OF MR. NEHRU'S VIEWS ON RELIGION

[Mr. Nehru's views on religion are in many respects typical of the sort of criticism directed against religion in these days. In the following paragraphs we have mainly dealt with Mr. Nehru's estimate of religion as expressed in his autobiography, but by the very nature of the subject we have been lead to consider some of the wrong assumptions and attitudes of the critics of religion in general.]

### I

**T**HE Autobiography of Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru is perhaps the most important among the publications on India that have appeared in recent years. It has received world-wide attention which it richly deserves ; for besides revealing to the wider public a charming yet forceful personality with revolutionary ardour, it has the merit of being by far the ablest presentation of India's case before the world at large. As it may be naturally expected, the autobiography of a leading politician like Mr. Nehru cannot but be mainly political in its content and outlook, and for a magazine like the *Vedanta Kesari*, which is mainly devoted to religion, much of its subject-matter lies beyond the legitimate field of comment and criticism. But Mr. Nehru and his political philosophy obtrude on the religious world-view in so far as they draw their inspiration from Marxism, and in several places in the Autobiography one therefore comes across trenchant reflections on religion. It is this fact, together with the consideration that Mr. Nehru is the first great Indian leader to declare candidly his antipathy, though not hostility, to religion, and yet gain a popularity hardly surpassed by any other national leader—it is this that makes us indulge in the following reflections on his views on religion.

It will be interesting, in the first place, to enquire what it is that lies at the root of Mr. Nehru's antipathy towards religion. A reader of the Autobiography would at first be inclined to find reasons for it in what appears as Mr. Nehru's scientific turn of mind and Occidental habits of thought. Mr. Nehru himself seems to think so when he criticises the "usual religious outlook" as the "enemy of clear thought," as something based on the acceptance of certain fixed and unalterable theories and dogmas, and as a product of "sentiment, emotion and passion," or when he bemoans his inability to "enter into the spirit and ways of thinking of my countrymen." But in both these respects, one can show, on the basis of the Autobiography itself, that Mr. Nehru is not what he seems, nor even what he apparently thinks himself to be at times. He is as much a creature of feeling as any religious man, and at times he is very well aware of this. In one place he says by way of criticism of Mahatma Gandhi : "But I am becoming more and more convinced that in vital matters the mind by itself does not carry us far. 'If your heart does not want to,' said William James, 'your head will assuredly never make you believe.' The emotions govern the general outlook and control the mind. Our conversations

(convictions ?), whether they are religious, political or economic, are really based on emotion or instinct. As Schopenhauer has said : 'Man can do what he wills, but he cannot will what he will will.' " In this general reflection on the nature of human thought Mr. Nehru must include himself also, and as we shall show presently, both his criticism of religion and his positive conviction in socialism are sprung from a deep strain of feeling in him.

Next, is Mr. Nehru fundamentally un-Indian in thought, and is there in him any constitutional incapacity for religious feeling ? Here also the intellectual garb of Mr. Nehru gives a wrong impression of the real stuff of his personality. He may at times think that his thought and approach to life are more akin to what is called Western than Eastern, and yet, as he says, "Behind me lie, somewhere in the subconscious, racial memories of a hundred, or whatever the number may be, generations of Brahmans. I cannot get rid of that past inheritance . . . . .". That these "generations of Brahmans" do actually operate within him powerfully, keeping him true to his Indian heritage in his heart of hearts, is revealed by a little incident in his early life. He says how, after his return from England, *shikar* used to be one of his few diversions, but even here his reputation was "singularly bloodless ;" and what was more, "an incident with a little antelope damped even the little ardour that I possessed for *shikar*. This harmless little animal fell down at my feet, wounded to death, and looked up at me with its great big eyes full of tears. Those eyes have often haunted me since." A reaction of this kind is characteristically

Indian, and is the result of a spiritual refinement coming down the stream of time from a distant past—of "the racial memories of a hundred . . . generations of Brahmans." It reveals that Mr. Nehru is endowed with a plentiful reserve of sensitiveness—a quality which is so dominant a feature of Indian character, and which is at the root of India's religiosity. Mr. Nehru is therefore typically Indian, and seems to be endowed with a nature that should, under ordinary circumstances, be highly susceptible to religious influences.

## II

Why then is he cold towards religion ? A study of his Autobiography leads us to think that it is due to two reasons—one a prejudice and the other a type of metaphysical indecision. To consider the first of these, the prejudice is not merely the result of a revulsion from the excesses, abuses and corruptions of organised religion. Indeed, Mr. Nehru is impatient with religion of this type. He says, "The spectacle of what is called religion, or at any rate organised religion, in India and elsewhere has filled me with horror, and I have frequently condemned it and wished to make a clean sweep of it. Almost always it seems to stand for blind belief and reaction, dogma and bigotry, superstition and exploitation, and the preservation of vested interests." As if religion is the solitary criminal in this respect among institutionalised human ideals ! An impartial and judicious critic cannot but subject the cherished loves of the modern mind—science, industrialism, democracy and also Mr. Nehru's favourite 'ism,' socialism—to the same criticism. But as fond parents always hope to see great-

ness and glory come even out of the wickedness of their erring children, our moderns expect the perversities of their favourite institutions to be rectified in course of time, and hope for the dawn of the millennium through their offices. Only religion, the orphan boy, does not merit any such indulgence, and deserves the capital sentence of being 'swept away'!

And yet, many a religious man will agree with Mr. Nehru in his criticism of organised religion, and would not consider him prejudiced against religion for this criticism. The prejudice actually comes in when Mr. Nehru opines, apparently under the inspiration of thinkers like Russell, that religion is essentially individualistic and therefore asocial. "But this does mean," he remarks, "that the religious outlook does not help, and even hinders, the moral and spiritual progress of a people, if morality and spirituality are to be judged by the world's standards, and not by the hereafter. Usually religion becomes an asocial quest for God or the Absolute, and the religious man is concerned far more with his own salvation than with the good of society. The mystic tries to rid himself of self, and in the process usually becomes obsessed with it."

While one may accept these remarks as applicable to certain religious types, they are quite unfair to religion as a way of life, or to religion as a motivating force in human history. As a way of life, every religion is an attempt at reconciling the egoistic and the altruistic, the individual and the social, impulses in man. Christianity does it by inculcating the love of one's neighbour; Islam, by insisting on the equality of all before Allah; Buddhism, through its doctrine

of the Bodhisattva; and Hinduism, through its gospel of Swadharma and work as worship. In fact, if Mr. Nehru would but study any of these religions with as much care and perseverance as he has done Marxism, he would find in all of them not only a message of redemption but also an incentive to action and all-round development of human personality. The word religion would not then convey to him, as he pictures, a dismal medley of "rites and ceremonial, of sacred books, of a community of people, of certain dogmas, of morals, reverence, love, fear, hatred, charity, sacrifice, asceticism, fasting, feasting, prayer, ancient history, marriage, death, the next world, of riots and the breaking of heads, and so on." It would begin to mean for him essentially—holiness, self-surrender to the larger life, service of society in the spirit of worship and above all the manifestation of the divinity within oneself.

Coming next to the role of religion as a motive force in history, it is surprising to note how a student of human history like Mr. Nehru overlooks its contributions so completely. Perhaps this may be due to his total rejection of the teleological and ideological views of history, and the wholesale acceptance of the Marxian doctrines of dialectical materialism and class war. But no one, who views impartially the procession of nations along the corridors of time, can fail to notice that the most vital and creative periods of cultures synchronise with epochs of dominant religious consciousness in their history. Such was the case with the Hindus, the Greeks, the Romans and the Arabs. The popular opinion may be somewhat different in regard to European civili-



sation, and historians of a self-conceited age like ours may relegate the Mediæval history of Europe, with its dominant religious note, to the period of barbarism, and see the high watermark of European culture in the 20th century. But a historian like Spengler, who has a broader perspective of history and a better insight into its morphology, holds that Mediæval age was an age of culture in Europe, whereas the 20th Century is only an age of civilisation—a term which, according to him, signifies the period of a people's decline. In the age that evolved Christianity and the Catholic Church, fought the Crusades and produced the Gothic architecture, he discovers a remarkable flowering of the creative genius of Europe. The achievements of ages and peoples under the inspiration of religion may be looked down upon as the product of bourgeois culture by historians who are proletarian in sympathies, but even they cannot maintain, against the solid evidence of history, that religion only made people otherworldly, and never helped them to express themselves in society.

It is because Mr. Nehru completely disregards these contributions of religion towards the promotion of the 'good life' in society, even apart from its function as a redemptive force, that we are led to consider his estimate of religion as more a product of prejudice than of an impartial appraisal.

### III

Next we shall proceed to consider the metaphysical indecision which seems to characterise Mr. Nehru's views on religion. Mr. Nehru is a very close follower of Marx in his political philosophy, and he dis-

tinguishes himself from the other important political leaders of modern India by his uncompromising advocacy of Marxian doctrine of class war, which in turn is based upon the interpretation of history as an economic phenomenon. The whole edifice of social and political theories built by Marx rests ultimately upon the philosophical doctrine known as dialectical materialism, which has become the official philosophy of communism and its allied developments all the world over. In what sense the metaphysics of dialectical materialism differs from that of pre-Marxian materialism is a rather obscure point, but Marxians, however, are very strong in expressing their disgust of these older theories and claiming some novelty for their own. Be that as it may, dialectical materialism conceives existence as dynamic—as a process of conflict and synthesis of opposing forces, and holds that matter, whatever that entity may be, is the fundamental principle of existence, out of which has come out, in the course of evolution, every other vital, mental and social phenomenon, from life to classless society. As in the case of every other philosophy of this kind, dialectical materialism also can view consciousness and values only as a temporary episode in the transformation of material energies. For if matter is the fundamental principle, and therefore the seat of value, then value, like every other expression of matter, is bound to perish when, under the working of the second law of thermodynamics, the energy bottled up as matter dissipates itself in radiation, without leaving any further possibility of life, consciousness, society and class war. Thus human values have no ultimate signi-

fiance, either from the individual or the cosmic point of view, and thus dialectical materialism, like every other kindred philosophy, is in the final resort without any principle for the conservation of values. And yet, it asks man to devote himself wholly and entirely to the creation of values here in this world, the realisation of the highest values being possible according to it only in the classless society.

It may be interesting to enquire what incentive Marxism offers man in the creation of value here in the absence of any ultimate significance for it either in his personal life, or in the cosmic scheme. Here its striking difference from the religious point of view will be evident. All the imageries, crude as well as abstract, in which religion speaks of life after death—whether it be in terms of going to heaven, of reincarnation, of Nirvana or of absorption in Brahman—are meant to show that the physical and ethical struggle for the creation of values here in life have also a trans-mundane significance in the personal life of the individual as well as in the cosmic scheme, and that these values are conserved as spiritual potencies, even though their worldly expressions are fleeting and perishable. The doctrines of heaven and life after death may provoke the scornful laughter of the ultra-modern mind, but if one would but remove the surface layers of their symbolism and examine the impelling motive behind, one would recognise a deep-seated conviction, that the highest one knows of in life has an ultimate ground in existence. That the highest and the noblest aspirations of man in a way mirrors the heart of reality, that they survive the

vicissitudes and fluctuations in the career of our limited personalities and of the vast, impersonal universe of matter—this forms the basic conviction behind what is called the religious phenomena. Thus, for the religious man, the 'good life' is to be pursued, because the pursuit of it here in life is the pathway for its realisation in eternity. The doctrine does not even imply so much an irreducible element of personal immortality; for the 'person,' as we understand it in this world of change and limitation, may be conceived as getting absorbed in the contemplation of the 'highest good'. Even here the principle of the conservation of the highest value stands. Whether one agrees or not with the conviction of religion in the conservation of the highest value, it cannot be denied that it provides a very logical and understandable basis for the pursuit of 'the 'good life' in society also.

In place of this trans-mundane basis for the 'good life,' dialectical materialism would have an ideal of social perfection without any ultimate basis whatever. It is true that life and value form only by-products of material evolution, and are bound to perish when energy gets ultimately dissipated, and becomes unavailable for work, in the course of the inevitable working of the second law of thermodynamics. But that is no reason why man should not strive for establishing the perfect society, so long as conditions in this planet are favourable for social life. The creation of a good society here on this earth should therefore form the only incentive for ethical life, according to dialectical materialism. To criticise such a conception of life is quite easy. It deprives life of all its ultimate

significance, and makes it ununderstandable and valueless, even as we may a line of zeroes, by rubbing away the value-giving figure at its head. To many it may appear that, if the nature of ultimate reality is as dialectical materialism reveals it, an ethics of suicide may be found more rational, and even more desirable, than the ideals for which socialism stands. Then again the promise of the socialist gospel, namely, a perfect society, seems more like an election cry than a sober philosophical teaching. Even if a general improvement in the standard of living all the world over were possible, there is no ground to believe that it will in itself make man happy, since happiness depends as much on psychical conditions as on food and other physical necessities of life. All the rich men in the world should otherwise have been very happy, which is not actually the case. Thinkers of Marxian persuasion, however, disregard all such criticism as the outcome of bourgeois prejudice, and prescribe the total annihilation of individualistic outlook as the only panacea for the mentality that raises such criticism. But it must be remembered that abuse is no answer, and even coercion verging on persecution cannot justify an impossible theory of value, namely, that man should try to create value but never accept in his world-view any principle that conserves them. A disinterested critic will easily see that whatever justification there may be for the Marxian ideals of social amelioration, there is absolutely none for its queer theory of value, which is merely a product of an obsessional fear of the individual. Marxian thinkers, however, have no doubt regarding the truth of their theory of value, and wherever they

have obtained political power, they have enforced it with fanatical zeal.

What is Mr. Nehru's position in regard to this theory? He seems to be in a condition of agnostic indecision, which is so alien to the spirit of Marxism. He says that the religious world-view is all wrong, and criticises it in no uncertain terms. But he does not, however, say what his own world-view and theory of value are. In one place he even expresses his doubt regarding the truth of the theory of value propounded by Marx. And what is still more indicative of his indecision, he quotes from Romain Rolland's Ramakrishna a passage just to make his attitude towards religion clear, but which unfortunately has the contrary effect. The passage is as follows :

"Romain Rolland also has stretched religion to mean something which will probably horrify the orthodox of organised religions. In his Life of Ramakrishna he says : '... many souls who are or who believe they are free from all religious belief, but who in reality live immersed in a state of super-rational consciousness, which they term Socialism, Communism, Humanitarianism, Vitalism or even Rationalism. It is the quality of thought, and not its object, which determines its source and allows us to decide whether or not it emanates from religion. If it turns fearlessly towards the search for truth, at all costs with single-minded sincerity prepared for any sacrifice, I should call it religious ; for it presupposes faith in an end to human effort higher than the life of existing society, and even higher than the life of humanity as a whole. Scepticism itself, when it proceeds from vigorous natures true to the core, when it is an expression of

strength and not of weakness, joins in the march of the Grand Army of the religious souls.' I cannot presume to fulfil all the conditions laid down by Romain Rolland, but on these terms I am prepared to be a humble camp follower in the Grand Army." (Italics are our own.)

Again quoting Professor Dewy, he says: "Religion is 'whatever introduces *genuine perspective into the piecemeal and shifting episodes of existence*', or again 'any activity pursued on behalf of an ideal end against obstacles, and in spite of threats of personal loss, because of *conviction of its general and enduring value*, is religious in quality.' If this is religion, then surely no one can have the slightest objection to it." (Italics are our own.)

To our mind it appears that, if Mr. Nehru admits all the implications of the passages in italics, especially of expressions like "an end higher than

the life of humanity as a whole," and "pursuit of an ideal end because of the conviction of its enduring value," then Mr. Nehru is unconsciously admitting a trans-social principle of conservation of the highest value, and an ultimate principle giving meaning and perspective to life as a whole. In the light of this admission he will have to revise much of what he has spoken about religion in other parts of the book. The passages quoted by him may horrify some of the orthodox of organised religions, but not certainly any one of broad and enlightened views on religion; for they assert the fundamental conviction of the religious world-view, *viz.*, faith in an ultimate super-social end and in the conservation of the highest value. It would seem Mr. Nehru has not thought out the question of religion as clearly and as deeply as he has done several other problems treated in his Autobiography.

## SPIRITUAL COUNSELS OF AN ILLUMINED SOUL

By Sri Sivasuta

[The following extracts have been compiled from the letters of Swami Sivananda, written in Bengali, to his disciples and others who sought spiritual instruction from him. Swami Sivananda was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and was the late President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. He was a great spiritual personage and a living embodiment of the priceless words of wisdom given below.]

### SERVICE

**T**HERE is nothing so dear to the Lord as dedicating one's life to selfless service. In every way the Lord takes care of those who have renounced self-love for His sake, and are occupied with His work. When such men meet with difficulties in doing God's work, He Himself removes them, provided they are imbued with unfailing faith in Him.

The best attitude towards work is that the Lord does His own work, and we are mere instruments in His hands. Service of God in man is the way to infinite good. Take proper care of the body. When the body is quite fit, you can do a lot of His work. But if the body is sick, you can do neither service nor Sadhana (spiritual practice). Selflessness converts service into Sadhana. Dis-

interested service is in no way inferior to prayer and worship. Only one should work heart and soul. Whatever you do, do with the same absorption with which you perform meditation and the repetition of His holy name. Do work as worship. The Lord loves His servant most.

### PEACE

The only way to lasting peace is complete surrender to, and full dependance on, God in weal and woe, in pleasure and pain. Life will not be felt as a burden if one's time is devoted to the service of the helpless sick, feeding of the poor, and removal of the miseries of the afflicted. Along with this, if an aspirant can practice regularly some kind of prayer or meditation, peace will dawn upon his soul, and it will not depart from him as long as he performs these things sincerely. Never allow your mind to get restless. Restlessness destroys all peace of mind. As soon as mind becomes restless, pray to God with the earnestness with which a boy cries to his mother for something. Then peace will return to your mind again. In however untoward a circumstance you may be thrown, do not forget Him. By remembering Him, everything will turn favourable in no time. Constant recollection of God will result in overflowing blessedness. Otherwise, whether you are a monk or a householder, you will have to spend the life in restlessness. A prayerful man is ever peaceful, in whatever station of life he may be.

Give up all idle plans. Idle planning draws you away from God. Be happy in all places and conditions. Be ever ready to do or undertake anything according to His will. Thus, if you resign yourself wholly to the

Lord, peace will always reign in your heart. There is no other way to peace. Complete resignation is the source of eternal peace and bliss. The Lord resides in His divine abode ever awake to our yearnings. Our sincere prayers reach Him, as soon as they are uttered. Prayers are certain to be answered, if they come from the bottom of our hearts. The Lord alone is the abode of peace, so thoughts of Him alone can give us peace. There is no other way to it.

Whoever has taken shelter with God, for even a moment, with his whole heart, will never be deserted by Him, even if the man does not seek His aid in time of need. If you love a saint deeply, this devotion will reach Him through the saint. Our love and reverence for the men of God are never barren. To pray for pure devotion is to pray for everything. Pure devotion is accompanied by the fulfilment of our wants. I do not want anything from anybody. My wants are few and they are fulfilled by God anyhow. What I want from you all is that you think of God always, and devote your life to His service. This world is a farce. The real thing, therefore, in human life is the search for Truth. The more you love me, the more you love Him, for I have lost my identity in Him. All speculations about God are good and effective, for they are from Him. Whatever divine idea appears in you, lose yourself in it. That will lead your mind Godward. Do not differentiate one divine idea from another.

### SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Make a habit of getting up regularly at 3 A.M., in the morning, and

after ablutions practise meditation. That time is most suited for spiritual practices. These sacred hours before sunrise are better than any other time of the day and night for the practice of inwardness. At the time of telling the beads, you must also visualise a form of God. Meditate on this form first in navel (plexus), then in the heart and the place between the eye-brows, and lastly in the *Sahasrara chakra* (in the head).

The more you will be troubled and tortured in the world, the more you will think of God. Know it for certain that loving remembrance of God sunders our attachments to the world. Tribulations of the world indirectly drive our mind towards God. This is how the devotees are gradually drawn to Him. The monks should create a discontent, that they are not being blessed by His grace. The presence of such discontent in the mind is indeed a blessing, otherwise how will man progress in spiritual life? As long as man is satisfied with earthly enjoyments and attainments, he has not started on the spiritual journey. When the pang of separation from Him pierces the mind, the time of God-vision is at hand. A true devotee does not ask God for anything but pure love for Him. As a child depends on its mother, the devout soul relies entirely on Him, thinking that he is His son and servant. God is with form and without form. He is again beyond both. He transcends all our conceptions of Him. One can, without any hesitation, meditate on any one of His multifarious aspects. Scriptural study, ritualistic worship, repetition of His name, prayer, pilgrimage, and holy company—all these means should be resorted to,

when one's mind is overcome by a feeling of monotony. But of all the means of purification and spiritual realisation, meditation tops the list. Constant and continuous remembrance of God makes us "whole". Kindle the fire of renunciation in your heart—and plunge yourself in His maddening love. Then alone spiritual experiences come. First install Him on the altar of your heart. When you succeed in that, you will find Him installed everywhere outside.

Everything depends on His grace—even the desire for spiritual practice. Eventually His vision, too, comes as a result of His blessing. To see holy men and holy places in dream is certainly very auspicious. By all means keep yourself far away from evil association. If one sincerely adheres to his spiritual exercises with faith, purity and devotion, he will be illumined at last. Spiritual life must be lived in absolute secrecy, for publicity harms our attempts. To give expression to divine emotions is unwholesome as it abates them. The more you conceal them, the more they are intensified. Be ever prayerful, then evil thoughts, even if they come to the mind, cannot linger long. The power of the Divine Incarnation is infinite, whereas that of the Gods and Goddesses is finite. Hence take up one Incarnation as the ideal, then the veil of ignorance will be soon torn away. Unflinching reliance on Him is the religion of the devotees.

Liberation in life, as contrasted with liberation after death, is like placing one foot on the threshold of a room and another foot outside. The former is a state in which everything of the inner and outer world is visible, and the latter is one in which one

enters the room and does not see anything outside. In it the outward consciousness is totally eliminated from the mind.

To think of a divine form in the heart is a kind of meditation, but take care that you think of it as immaterial and living. Do not forget to imagine that the form is very gracious to you, and is looking at you with deep affection and kindness. Such thoughts will fill your soul with love, hope and peace, and you will be blessed. During meditation, to think of His attributes is to continue a chain of uniform thoughts about this particular aspect. This will disable the mind from indulging in any other fancy. A drop of love is necessary to make our meditation pleasant and to remove the tedium accruing from the strain.

The nature of the mind is to become restless and unsteady now and then. Be not unsettled or upset by that. When the mind gets restrained, such occasional reactions will rather strengthen than weaken it. But patient and regular practice is the whole secret of realisation. Do not be in a hurry in spiritual life. Do your utmost, and leave the rest to God. Previous tendencies will be uprooted and obliterated by constantly thinking of Him, and the heart will be flooded with peace. The mind

gets stilled by His grace alone. "Thy will be done," is the motto of all devout souls.

Life-building is the sole concern of an aspirant. That is the primary object of his life. Everything else is secondary. The more you call on Him, the more you will be near to Him. Overflowing devotion is the only condition of His grace. Plain living and high thinking—that is the ideal of India. If you can live a pure, spotless and stainless life, it will be the source of real welfare to the public. When the life is actually lived, you need not teach anything orally. Your life will influence and change other lives indirectly. Example is more potent than precepts.

The Lord puts us in difficulties only to test and strengthen our faith. When you are in danger pray to him like a child, then those difficulties will become impotent. Love all equally. Do not wound the feelings of others. Only look up to Him for help and guidance. It is hard to turn the course of mind towards God after allowing it to dive deep in worldliness. But gradually it will change its ways, if you are resolute enough never to abstain from His thoughts. The Lord is most merciful. He rejects nobody's prayers. Never allow despair to overwhelm your mind. Only be regular and sincere in your daily meditations.

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## RELIGION OF ADVAITISM

By Surendra Nath Mitra, M.A., B.Sc., L.T.

[Mr. Mitra is an old contributor to the *Vedanta Kesari*. In the issue of this magazine for July, 1935, he wrote an article on the metaphysical aspect of Advaitism. In the present one he deals with its religious aspect. Modern religious thought tends to show that the religious quest of man is ultimately a quest after the supreme and enduring Value. For one conversant with these tendencies of modern thought, Mr. Mitra's discussion of the Advaitic theory of supreme Value, as expressed in the concept of Ananda, will appear as a very desirable approach, to be more widely adopted in the study of Indian philosophy. Mr. Mitra will conclude the article in the next issue, with a discussion of the Advaitic conception of Divine Love.]

### I

SINCE the Absolute, the very self of existence, is transcendental, it must necessarily transcend all conceptions. Hence, it cannot serve as God, the object of religion—the object of our highest veneration, worship and love—unless we conceive of it somehow or other as such. Man can never worship God as He is, but only as he conceives Him to be the conception having its content rich with the values he genuinely cherishes as the highest by actual experience. Hence, God must have to be conceived in terms of metaphors representing recognised values. Religion, by its very nature, is necessarily a worship of idols, *i.e.*, values.<sup>1</sup> Hence, the philosophy of God conceived in the imagery of Advaitism can never have anything to do with religion, unless and until its Absolute is expressed in terms of values. So, the next problem is, "What justifiable sense, if any, is there in representing the Absolute in terms of values?"

<sup>1</sup>"Every concept of God, said Fichte, is the concept of an idol. But the fact that in the face of all pious attempts to formulate the Divine, it dares to denounce them as idolatry is itself a witness to the divine spark within human thought."—*Philosophy of Religion*, by Harald Höffding; Ch. II-B; Art. 18; p. 68.

We get the concept of existence as the common datum of all our experiences. And, then, looking into the meaning of this concept, we are led by pure reason—by the necessity of thought—to go beyond the concept and recognise transcendental reality as Absolute Existence. Thus, existence, as a concept, which is a subject-matter of this pure reason, is a means by which our knowledge transcends phenomena, and touches, as it were, the Absolute (just as Kant's categorical imperative of practical reason touches the thing-in-itself).

The concept, existence, therefore, implied in the phenomena, especially, though partially, partakes of the nature of the Absolute, in the sense that it is a means of our transcending itself and touching the Absolute beyond. This is why the Absolute is called Transcendental Existence (*Paramartha Sat*).

Now, if we look into our own phenomenal existence, the only thing we know directly, we find that we not only exist but also *love* to exist and hate to die (*i.e.*, to cease to exist). Moreover, the more is our existence enriched with values, the more do we love it; and, similarly, the more burdened with disvalues is our life, the more undesirable or hateful does



it become. The undesirability due to the disvalues may increase to such an extent that it overcomes the desirability of life as a bare animal existence, and leads people to commit suicide when even the hope of a removal of the disvalues disappears completely. Again, martyrs would sacrifice their lives for the sake of a valuable cause, such as honour, religious faith, or the freedom of their country. This shows, no doubt, that there *are* things more valuable than life in the sense of a bare vegetative or animal existence. Nevertheless, the inference is irresistible, in each case, that the experienced values, including that of life in the sense of a bare vegetative or biological existence, are allied to the basic constitution of our being, since it assimilates them with relish. The disvalues, on the other hand, may be inferred reasonably enough as foreign to the fundamental constitution of our existence, since it seeks to reject them. This is what we invariably observe with the introduction of all foreign things into our system. Even a speck of dust rankles in the eye, and the organism tries to get rid of it. An unassimilable food, or a poison, introduced into the body, is either rejected by it, or the food produces disease (even in the literal sense of *dis-ease*) or death. The system recoils with displeasure from an electric current of an injurious intensity or from contact with a chemical of a harmful strength.

But values are things which produce satisfaction. That is, a thing assumes its valuableness only in relation to the satisfaction produced. A piece of meat has a value to a dog, but it has no value to a cow. Even for the same individual, a thing may or may not have value under varying

circumstances. A medicine which may be of value for a sick person ceases to be valuable for him on his recovery. Thus, we see that the value of a thing *depends* on the satisfaction it gives. Hence, satisfaction, the essence of values, is an invariable concomitant of our phenomenal existence. For, when all other kinds of satisfaction may be supposed to be absent, and even when life may be burdened with various kinds of overwhelming dissatisfaction, the presence of satisfaction due to the continuation of life as a mere biological or vegetative existence cannot be denied; since, so long as life lasts, it can, with a little effort of attention, be always detected by introspection.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, we feel a constant spontaneous urge not only to preserve

<sup>2</sup>As to the contention of the philosophical pessimists who maintain, like the Naiyayikas, that mere negation of pain may be considered, by parity of reasoning, as pertaining to the basic constitution of our life, seeing that this, too, is found by experience to be often an object of desire just as pleasure sometimes is, the following refutation of Madhusudana Saraswati is appropriate in this connection :—"From the experience of the fact that pleasure is always accompanied by absence of pain, irrespective of conditions, all people agree as to the following invariable concomitance, *viz.*, that whenever there is pleasure there is negation of pain, too. On the other hand, absence of pain is not invariably accompanied by pleasure, as evident from the experiences of slumber, fainting, etc. Hence, it should be inferred that the value of pleasure necessarily includes that of the negation of pain, and not *vice versa*. Therefore, it is pleasure that is the independent object of desire."

"यदा सुखं तदा दुःखाभाव इति हि व्याप्तिः सर्वसम्मता निरुपाधिसहचारदर्शनाद्.....। यदा दुःखाभावस्तदा सुखमिति न तद्व्याप्तिः सुषुप्ति-प्रलयादौ व्यभिचाराद् । अतो दुःखाभावस्य सुखा-व्याप्यत्वात्तत्परिचायकत्वं सुखस्य ...। अतस्तदेव [सुखं] स्वतन्त्रः पुरुषार्थः"

Madhusudana Saraswati's own commentary on his Bhakti-Rasayana; Ch. I, verse 1.

the kinds of satisfaction we sincerely recognise, but also to develop them continually towards perfection. The imperfection of satisfaction, therefore, has to be recognised as foreign to the basic constitution of our being. As it is impossible to think of attaining this perfection in our phenomenal existence, it must belong to the Realm of Transcendence. Here, then, in the element of satisfaction, we have something which not only tends, like existence, to transcend itself, but seems even to help us to reach the very heart, as it were, of the Absolute. We have in it something that may be used as a metaphor to express the Absolute so that It may be conceived of as the fit object of religion. In other words, to borrow a metaphor from Integral Calculus, the Absolute may be conceived of as the limiting value of all values, where all their imperfections or limitations due to phenomenalism vanish.

## II

Now, satisfaction necessarily implies consciousness ; for it is absurd to think of the satisfaction of a thing utterly devoid of consciousness. Therefore, consciousness and satisfaction are both invariable concomitants of existence as we know it in ourselves, or inferentially, in all animals, including even the tiniest worm or ameba. Coming to plants, too, we observe them spontaneously turning towards light, as well as driving their roots and spreading out their branches towards quarters where food is available. They react against stimuli such as an electric current or an injurious chemical in a purposive manner similar to that of animals. Their structure, too, is cellular, and growth spontaneous from within,

similar to those of animals. Thus, the inference is irresistible that even plants, which are apparently devoid of consciousness, do possess a consciousness, which we are bound to conceive of in teleological terms and which cannot, therefore, be thought of as completely devoid of satisfaction, although the consciousness may be in a very rudimentary and obscure stage of development.<sup>3</sup> Bacteria, too, which are only vegetable micro-organisms, must essentially be the same as plants ; and, hence, consciousness, together with the element of satisfaction, may reasonably be inferred as present in bacteria.

Now, let us pass from micro-organisms to the world of what is generally considered as inanimate matter. Here, too, we can infer reasonably enough the presence of consciousness, although in a latent form.

One reason to infer the presence of latent consciousness in the material world is the biological theory of biogenesis, which is now undisputed. The earth, being an off-shoot of the sun, must have been originally so hot that its condition must have been destructive of every form of life, even the lowest, that is known to modern

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Manu-Samhita ; 1:49—"These (plants) possessing consciousness within are provided with (experiences of) pleasure and pain."

"अन्तःसंज्ञाः भवन्त्येते सुखदुःखसमन्विता ॥"

Also cf. the following saying of Rama to Vishwamitra :— "O (great sage of) mighty intellect, what difference is there between a baby and a plant that, possessing consciousness within, are equally unable to remedy heat and cold ?"—

"अन्तश्चित्तेरशक्तस्य शीतातपनिवारणे ।

को विशेषो महाबुद्धे बालस्योर्वीरहस्तया ॥"

—Yogavasishtha-Ramayanam ; 1:19:28.

**Biology.** As the planet cooled down, a stage was reached at which the lowest forms of life must have evolved out of so-called lifeless matter. According to the theory of biogenesis, life can spring only from life, *i.e.*, no form of life can come out of something which is totally lifeless. Hence, even before this critical stage in the history of our planet, the so-called lifeless matter must have contained life in a latent form, however little may be our knowledge about the specific nature of this form.<sup>4</sup>

Before the dawn of the age of modern Organic Chemistry, many chemists supposed that there exists a "vital energy," different, not only in form but also in kind, from chemical or physical energy. But the hypothesis of this "vital energy" has long ago been completely exploded, and the "vital energy" has now been absorbed into chemical energy by the explanation of all the phenomena of Organic Chemistry by means of chemical action along with enough of experimental verification too.

<sup>4</sup>From the fact that protein is an invariable concomitant of life, even down to the lowest form that is known at present, it seems sufficiently reasonable to define life, *as known to us*, as a form of energy manifested in the formation of protein. At the critical stage in the history of the earth we have been referring to, perhaps life appeared in a still simpler form in the combination of carbon and nitrogen to form a much simpler compound.

"E. Pflüger has argued that the analogies between living proteid and the compounds of cyanogen are so numerous that they suggest cyanogen as the starting point of protoplasm. Cyanogen and its compounds, so far as we know, arise only in a state of incandescent heat. Pflüger suggests that such compounds arose when the surface of the earth was incandescent, and that in the long process of cooling, compounds of cyanogen and hydrocarbons passed into living protoplasm . . . by the acquisition of water and oxygen."—(*Encyclopædia Britannica*; 11th Edition; Vol. XVI; Art. 'Life,' p. 601, 2nd column).

Energy has now been proved to be essentially *one*, capable of manifesting itself in various forms, including that of chemical energy, the different forms being all transformable into one another. Consciousness, being invariably inherent in life, may then be regarded as a form of energy only growing out of, and existing side by side with, some other forms of it, which are yet left untransformed in the original forms of chemical and physical energy. The modern psychological theory of psycho-physical parallelism may be reasonably viewed in this light, and the present gulf between "spirit" and "matter" may then be bridged. Consciousness may, therefore, be regarded as inherent in energy, different material collocations being merely the formal conditions in which energy appears in particular forms.

Many readers may become sceptical about, if not ridicule, my conception of matter as merely formal conditions, which really mean only forms. They may shrug their shoulders at what it is natural for them to think of as my audacity or presumption to reduce to mere forms a thing which is universally experienced by all as offering resistance to our movements. For such readers I beg to state that I do not deny the thing which offers resistance. Strictly speaking, that which *does* offer it—that which is the cause of resistance—is energy, although in text-books of Physics we read of "matter" as offering resistance. Movement is nothing but energy in kinetic form, and energy cannot be resisted or acted on by anything but energy, for, it is absurd to think of two things quite dissimilar as acting and reacting on each other. Accurately speaking, one

part of energy through a form, called matter, resists a second part of energy through a second form, which is also matter. The concrete material bodies which we *perceive*, and which are often, for the sake of brevity, called matter in books on natural sciences, too, are neither matter nor energy. They are matter-energy compounds, energy being the substance and matter a mere form in which the substance appears. Matter and energy are two co-ordinate concepts, and hence each of these has a merely subjective existence.

The second reason to think that consciousness is present in material bodies is the psychological principle of assimilation. The food taken by all organisms is apparently dead matter, whether the food is derived from the mineral world (such as salts), from the vegetable world, or from the animal world. But living cells are produced out of this food. The new living cells being different individuals from the old ones—for evidently the latter have not transmigrated into the former—we cannot but conclude that life has grown out of the energy in the food-material (through some sort of intervention of the living cells already present in the organism). As life cannot be conceived to exist as utterly devoid of consciousness, we are bound to conclude that consciousness must be latent in material energy, or, in other words, that material energy must be transformable into consciousness—unless we deny causal explanation altogether by adopting the absurd hypothesis that totally dissimilar things can grow out of each other, or that something can be created out of nothing.<sup>5</sup>

### III

Thus, we see that the three invariably concomitant concepts, being, consciousness and satisfaction, may be used as appropriate metaphors, in terms of which we may define the Absolute, so that It may now be adequately rich in content and thus fully serve the purpose of the highest conceivable religion. These three concepts are known in the Vedanta Philosophy as *Sat*, *Chit*, and *Ananda* respectively. They are called the essential characteristics (Swarupa-Lakshanas), as it were, of Brahman, the Absolute. As *Ananda* (satisfaction) necessarily implies consciousness and being, according to the justifiable interpretation of the Vedanta Philosophy, the word *Ananda* alone, interpreted in the Vedantic sense of something *positive*, may also suffice to stand for Brahman as *the object of religion*. Hence, although in the earlier Upanishads we nowhere come across the three characteristics, following in immediate sequence and forming a single compound word as in the later systematic books on the Vedanta, yet the Upanishadic characterisations are identical in sense with that of the systematic Vedanta, the only difference being one of more or less explicitness of expression.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> In this connection, Sankara's argument that mind is only a changed form of food, since the mental functions grow feebler and feebler with the prolongation of a fast, will also stand to reason, in essence, for all time. His following statement, too, is not without significance in this connection :—  
"Conscious presiding agents can be cognised even in earth, etc."—

"मृदादिष्वपि चेतनाधिष्ठातारोऽभ्युपगम्यते॥"

Brahma-Sutra Bhashya ; 1:3:33.

<sup>6</sup> The compound word, *Sat-chit-ananda*, occurs in the later Upanishad, *Nrsingha-Uttara-Tapini* (Khandas IV, V, VI, etc.).

(To be continued.)

## ETERNAL CREATION IN THE RIG VEDA

By Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy

[Dr. Coomaraswamy, the renowned scholar and connoisseur of Indian Art, is the Fellow for Research in Indian Art in Museum of Fine Arts, New York. In this article he compares the doctrine of timelessness of creation as found in the Rig Veda with similar doctrines propounded by modern science.]

EDIC *sadya* has as much the sense of "suddenly" and "presently" as that of "to-day". For example, RV. III, 29, 3, *sadyah pravita vrsanam jajana*, "No sooner was the Mother impregnated, than she bore the Bull"; IV, 7, 10, *sadyo jatasya dadrshanam ojah*, "No sooner born than shewed his power"; VI, 19, 2, *sadyo cid vavrdhe asami*, "Was grown forthwith to full stature"; VII, 101, 1, *sadyo jato vrsabho roraviti*, "At once when born, the Bull licked"; X, 115, 1, "No sooner had she borne him (*yadi jjanat*) that at once he waxed (*nu vavaksa*), forthwith went on his great errand" (*sadyo mahi dutyam caran*). In all these passages, *sadya* is equivalent to *maksu* in X, 61, 20, "Instant when his Mother bore him (*maksu...suta mata*) he stood erect". Cf. also *Taittiriya Samhita*, VI, 3, 1, 4, "Neither a horse nor a mule chariot can instantly (*sadyah*, literally 'to-day') compass the earth, but intellect (*manas*) can instantly encompass it; can even overpass it"; to be understood in connection with RV. VI, 9, 5, where intellect is called the "swiftest of birds", and similar passages in which there is implied an assimilation of intellect with light. As regards the immediacy of the eternal birth, the citations above may be compared with Eckhart, "There is no time where this birth befalls", and "this

birth remains in the Father eternally . . . who utters in one single word the whole of what he knows, the whole of what he can afford, in one single instant, and that instant is eternal".

*Nu* or *nu* and *nunam* are in the same way "presently" and "immediately", or "always", or with a negative, "never". For example, RV. VIII, 77, 1, *jajnano nu*, with the meaning of *sadyo jatasya* or *sadyo jatah*, "no sooner born than". In I, 48, 3 cited below, *nu* is tantamount to "now and evermore". Eternity is in fact strictly speaking "now"—that "now" and "present" out of which the past and future flow in opposite directions, but of which we, for whom becoming never stops to be, can have no immediate experience.

*Agre*, again, equivalent to Lat. *in principio*, is as much "in principle" as "in the beginning", and implies as much or more a priority in hierarchy as a priority in time. Here too the Scholastic exegesis was the same, interpreting Genesis I, 1, \* *in principio*, "in the beginning" according to the Revised Version, to mean "in the First Principle", in the Son, the "art" of God and source of the whole emanation.

The past tense in RV. has moreover very generally a present and even a future implication, as pointed out, for example, by Macdonell, *Vedic Grammar for Students*, 213 (A).

For example, RV. 1, 48, 3 *uvaso uchac ca nu*, rendered by Macdonell, *ib.* p. 238 "Dawn has shone (in the past) and she shall shine now (= henceforth)"; similarly, *vavardha*, "throve", is "a statement of permanent truth" (Bloomfield and Edgerton, in *Vedic Variants*, 1, 837), and the force of *kṛtya* was originally timeless (Whitney, *Śanskrit Grammar*, 889, 894); Cf. Keith, *Aitareya Aranyaka*, 1909, pp. 179, Note 1.

These considerations afford additional proof of the justice of the view of Sayana and others that the Rg. Veda deals only with what is eternal (*nityam*). It is in fact only logically and empirically that the world can be said to have had a beginning at a given date past: more truly "All that they call thy battles, Indra, was thy magic" (Rv. X, 54, 2; *mayā* here in the sense of "mere seeming"); and if we find it said also that what done was done "once for all" (*apunar*, "never again", RV. X, 68, 10), there is no contradiction, for what is done eternally cannot be done "again". In traditional art, the method of "continuous narration" (representation in one scene of events presumed to have taken place on different occasions) similarly asserts the real simultaneity of the events illustrated. As in Scholastic formulation, the life of God is "uneventful". As expressed by Eckhart, following Augustine, *Hodie Dei est eternitas*, "God's to-day is eternity". \*

A remarkable illustration of the foregoing doctrine of the timelessness of "creation" can be cited in modern scientific formulation as follows: "The fresh start is always present, but it is not really a fresh start, it is the one start that every portion had, but differently reckoned. . . . . The world therefore lives for ever. . . . . If we call 'creation' the indescribable and unobservable state out of which the systems were born (for us, 2,00,00,00,000 years ago) then we may say that there are always events in the world for which antecedent creation is only just a thing of the past. We cannot observe the event of creation itself, even in the limit, for it is only an occurrence in our present for nebulae moving with the speed of light, and these if they existed would be invisible, unobservable. The event of creation itself is discreetly mantled in invisibility. . . . . There is no re-enactment of creation. Creation—one event; I have missed out the copula. You can say 'was' or 'is' at your choice. There is no difference in the two propositions, until an observer is mentioned" (Milne, E.A., "Some points in the philosophy of Physics; Time, Evolution, and Creation", in *Philosophy*, London, January 1934).

An ontological doctrine thus enunciated in scientific terms can hardly be distinguished from the proposition that "creation" is synonymous with the diremption (*vedha*) of essence and nature, knower and known;

\* *In principio creavit Deus caelum et terram.* As Eckhart comments in the *Opus Tripartitum, quod creavit in principio, id est in se ipso, sic patet: Creatio dat sive confert esse. Esse autem principium est et primo omnium, ante quod nihil et extra quod nihil, et hoc est Deus.*

\* Cf. St. Augustine, *Confessions*, XI, 13., "Thy years are one day; and Thy day is not every day, but to-day: seeing, Thy to-day gives not place unto tomorrow, for neither comes it in place of yesterday. Thy to-day is eternity".

apart from which, *viz.*, in eternity, there is neither observer nor observed, but only That One, without other (*tad ekam, advaitam*). The further statement of Milne's, that "the phrase 'the age of the universe' has no objective content", similarly parallels St. Augustine's treatment of the meaningless enquiry, "What was God doing before he made the world?" (*Confessions*, XI, 10 f).

It should be clearly realised, however, that such illustrations, however remarkable, are not to be regarded as proofs, but only as illustrations of

the traditional doctrine; principles neither stand in need of any confirmation *a posteriori*, nor can be proven or disproven by facts; facts, on the other hand, may be envisaged as traces of the principles on which they depend, and if so seen can be made use of as pointers to the higher levels of reference. Taken merely by and for itself the scientific conclusion is devoid of any spiritual, or, strictly speaking, intellectual value, and remains on the same empirical and dialectical level of reference as that of the facts from which it is deduced.

## ITINERACY FOR A WEEK

*By Swami Chidbhavananda*

[Swami Chidbhavananda of the Ramakrishna Mission gives, in these memoirs of his wanderings, an account of different religious types that are to be met in rural India.]

### I

**S**OME time back, when a Sadhu friend of mine and myself had been discussing about the various aspects of the rigid life of a Sannyasin, it occurred to us that we should also have, to some extent at least, personal experience of the drifting life of a mendicant. So we decided then and there to put this idea into practice. We were to go that very night to some place where we would be entirely strangers. That we had renounced the world in the name of the Lord would be our only introduction; and there was to be no earthly possession with us, save our bare clothing, one or two small books, a water vessel and a begging-bowl.

Equipped with this scanty kit of wandering Sanyasins, we started from Podanur at 1 a.m., by rail for our unknown destination. The

night had not worked itself out when we get down at a way-side station near Erode. The moon still continued to reign supreme in the western sky. Getting out of the railway station, we took a road that ran southward, without caring to know where it lead us. Like shadows we moved in the world, which is itself a shadow of reality. The dawn in the east began to pale the queen of the night into insignificance. Now the peasants on the road stared us in the face without uttering a syllable.

Having walked a considerable distance, we thought of our morning ablutions. The sun was already high above the horizon. We therefore deviated from the main road towards a green spot at a distance in the barren, undulating land that spread all around. On reaching the

place, we saw that it was an uncommonly decent farm with a nice coconut grove and a pomegranate orchard attached to it. The deep well with mango and margosa canopy all round looked a bit dreary. There was no human being anywhere about the place. We indulged in a prolonged bath and then engaged ourselves in our morning prayer and meditation. This over, we sat brooding over a few thoughts that we had gathered from the Gita.

Now an elderly peasant approached us reverentially. So I felt confident that the man will not summarily ask us to quit the place. Palms folded, the man circumambulated us three times, prostrated on the ground and stood respectfully with folded arms. My companion Sadhu bade the person take his seat. Occasional exchange of words took place in a hushed voice. We learnt that he was the proprietor of the farm.

The man had projected his idea of Sadhuhood on us, and had taken us for Mahatmas who had miraculously made their appearance in his land, for his special and personal benefit. He hoped that by our special grace, peace and plenty would be his lot. I inferred that he belonged to the class of mystery-mongers who believe that the Yogis could, by some supernatural method, change one's wheel of fortune if they choose to do so. We argued with the man that we were also ordinary mortals just as he was, that the entertainment of such mysterious ideas was always weakening to the mental and physical make up of one, that one should acquire one's needs and wants by righteous exertion and self-reliance, and that one should not care to accept, even from God, what one had

not worked for. This simple theory of life that we presented to him was not altogether displeasing to the rustic philosopher.

I deem him a philosopher because subsequently in the course of the conversation we had with him on God, Mukti, Karma etc., for every statement that we made, he gives a quotation from some scripture or other. I took him for a typical Hindu who knew more than what he was prepared to practise. The man politely enquired whether we would accept Bhiksha in his house that noon. Reply in the positive from us surprised the philosopher for two or three reasons. The Mahatmas should not, in the first place, eat at all, but if they do eat, they should just do parsimonious justice to a little milk and fruits. The third-rate Mahatmas are those who descend to the level of accepting cooked rice, without however making any breach in the strict rules of caste. But he found that we belonged to none of these super-human or extra-human categories. We were just the normal social creatures! The man now assumed a sort of paternal affection for us, and entertained us to the best of his means. He even requested us to stay a few days with him. We expressed our inability to accede to his request and went our way.

## II

We entered one evening a big, attractive village, with a picturesque hillock for its back ground. A decent little Ganesh temple afforded us sufficient accommodation, and we made ourselves quite comfortable there. Somebody who passed that way asked us whether we would not go to the temple on the hillock. We came to



know from him that that place was none other than the holy Chennimalai, one of the celebrated abodes of Sri Subramanya. We were immediately up on our feet, and directed our steps towards the hillock. At its foot, in front of a choultry, two or three of that class of holy men, who are usually termed as Andis, were seated, and we approached them to gather all particulars about the temple above. After furnishing us with the details, they requested us to join them for supper. This agreed upon, we spent about two contemplative and prayerful hours in the temple. That certain temples have a peculiar spiritual influence on human minds cannot be gainsaid. We felt a sort of divine peace and poise at this place.

The holy men then cordially entertained us to their simple meal, after which there was a brief religious talk amongst us. Before retiring to bed we took leave of them on the plea that we would be on the move early the next morning. One of them respectfully dissuaded us from doing so on the ground that he should have the privilege of serving us the next day also. We yielded to his wish. The same man—there was nothing striking about him—requested us the next day forenoon that, when we went to the southern side of the holy hill, we should spend some time at a certain Ganesh temple there, and that we should drink water from a well belonging to that temple. Why did this man attach so much importance to this otherwise trifling act? There was a history behind that,—so we were told by yet another man. Our curiosity was now roused. After a little persuasion, the person who asked us to

drink at the well got into a mood to relate to us the following legend-like marvel :—

“Three years ago, on a midsummer day, I happened to go to the southern side of this hill. The scorching heat of the afternoon sun drove me to the necessity of taking shelter under a tree by the side of the road. I had then by my side a shining brass *kamandalam* (water vessel). Three or four men from a distance came rushing headlong towards me and implored for a little water to wet their parched throats. Their plight and the vain hope I created in them by exhibiting an empty water pot mortified my heart to its very core. I observed that over an extensive area in that locality, not a drop of water could be had. It occurred to me immediately that life was not worth living if I could not do anything tangible for the thirsty wayfarers. The sign of the men whom I had disappointed was haunting my mind day and night. But what could I, a poor beggar, do? Granting that I was prepared to beg some money or do the work myself, which was the spot to sink a well? The whole area was rocky, and the idea of sinking a well seemed a vain hope.

“This thought was torturing me day and night. I felt life a burden. Afflicted with this painful thought and with a sorrowful prayer to Bala Subramanya, the presiding Deity of the hill, I went to bed one night.

“I had a glorious dream that night. With spear in hand, the smiling and resplendent figure of the Lord stood before me graciously. He told me in clear accent that he had made a mark for me on the ground a few cubits south-east of the spot

where I had sat with the empty water vessel some days back. In addition to this mark, purple bell creepers also would be found uprooted and strewn about there. Bala Velayudha instructed me that at that spot I was to sink but sixteen cubits in order to have my desire fulfilled.

"With a startle I woke up from the dream, and for the rest of the night I got no sleep, my mind oscillating between hope and anxiety. As soon as it was day-break I ran to the place with a palpitating heart. And O, the wonder of wonders, all the marks indicated in the dream were there! Though single-handed, I resolved immediately to apply myself to the task which I now felt was divinely ordained. Every Monday I began to beg and collect copper coins from visitors to the temple, and with the means thus obtained, I purchased one spade, one pickaxe and a crowbar. As soon as the first implement was bought, I began the work. Even as an ant works at its hole, I went on ceaselessly doing my daily task. Sometimes, to avoid the blazing sun, I used to work in the moon-light. For a depth of three cubits no assistance was required, as I could throw the dug up earth and pebbles above, and then remove them further off. But when the pit had sunk below my height, I required other hands to assist me in clearing the earth. I had no means to engage a labourer. For the coins I used to collect on Mondays, I procured puffed rice, fried grain and brown sugar, and these served as an inducement for the cowherd boys, to help me. Some nights I used to sleep in the pit, so that I may work when there was sufficient moon-light. Thus I worked diligently until fifteen cubits of earth was cut.

A cubit more—and I must get water if my dream was true. But no sign of water yet!

"One day in a mood of despondency I bitterly complained: 'Lord, believing your word, I have begun this work. According to your injunction, I shall sink sixteen cubits; but not an inch more. If no water is obtained, I shall drop down in this very barren pit, and die, rather than live!' (As he uttered these words, his face betrayed a bit of that original fervour.) With intense anxiety the sixteenth cubit was completed, and out gushed through a pickaxe hole, crystal pure water, which I sat and drank to my heart's content! The God within was appeased first, and then only the thought of offering it to Ganesha and Velayudha came into my mind. An altar to Ganesha and a shed have sprung up there in course of time, through the kindness of good-hearted people. Now that well has become a boon, by the grace of Bala Subramanya, to hundreds of thirsty wayfarers. My humble wish is that you should also partake a little of that water."

As he finished the narration, we were visibly moved by his piety and perseverance. And when we passed the well that afternoon, we sat near that holy spot, pondered over the mysterious ways of the Lord, and drank the cool refreshing water of the well—the result of the great Yajna (sacrifice) of a pious soul. The acts of sacrifice, performed by celebrities, reach the ears of the world at large. But here in this out of the way village, unknown to the outside world and perhaps un-recognised by himself, is a soul imbued with the spirit of Karma Yoga—one

who could do an act unselfishly and at great trouble to oneself, out of pure love for his fellow creatures and with firm faith in God.

### III

In the course of our wanderings, we approached a village one forenoon, rather jaded and hungry. A middle-aged man, who did not even seem to be moderately stationed in life, kindly enquired of us whether we would take our meal at his house. "What are you here?" we enquired. This question agitated him a bit, because in telling his profession he would also be indirectly telling his caste, at which he thought we would feel annoyed with him. For a low-caste man inviting a highly-placed one to eat with him amounts to insolence. With not a little concern he admitted his caste. We at first evaded an immediate answer by saying that we had to bathe and go to the temple. The man patiently waited for all these to be over, and then politely renewed his request. Caste scruple, which was somewhere buried in the sub-conscious regions of the mind, now tried to gain control over us. But it was immediately brushed aside, and we yielded to his request. The cleanliness of his little hut, the devotion with which both the husband and the wife entertained us to their simple but wholesome meal, the innocence of their two little children—all these put together revealed a new world to us. I felt that every morsel that went into my mouth was saturated with devotion and love. Involuntarily the thought flashed in my mind: "These are the supposed untouchables whom the cruel Indian caste-tyranny has held in suppression for centuries!"

### IV

Our itineracy would have been incomplete if we had not also resorted to Madhukari Bhiksha—accepting a handful of food from each house, just as bees gather honey from flower to flower. The idea behind this system is that this is the purest food for a mendicant since he does not over-tax a single house for his daily sustenance. Very often we would avoid the invitation of an individual, and go about begging house to house. Our refusal to accept coins evoked admiration. Some doubted whether we really begged or played at begging. It was a marvel to others that though we begged, we did not possess the inferiority complex of beggars. Not unoften a few old women would gather round us and request us, with all maternal affection, whether we could wait until they prepared better meal for us. Though immersed in ignorance and poverty, the love and hospitality of rural India was everywhere too patent to be overlooked.

### V

We had by now reached Podanur. In the vicinity of the town we were seated, one fine morning, under a cluster of trees by the side of a brook, and were communing with Nature. It was an ideal setting either for a poet or a philosopher. Occasionally we broke the silence by giving vent to some serious thoughts. Just then two Anglo-Indians who were sauntering about the field approached us and began to talk in broken Hindi, taking us for Sadhus from the north. Our knowledge of Hindi was in no way superior to theirs, and so we answered them in English. This surprised them and also drew them

closer to us. Our talk drifted to Hinduism and Christianity. They both immensely appreciated our viewing the teachings of Jesus Christ in the light of Hinduism. Just after parting from us, one of them exclaimed to the other, "I say, in the

Kingdom of Heaven the Hindus will surely occupy the first row!" This statement moved us to smile. Perhaps they believed Heaven to be something like a theatre where those who pay high are privileged to take the best seats.

## JAIN ETHICS

*By H. M. Desai*

[The ethics of Jainism has gained a great reputation for its sublimity and universality. Mr. Desai's brief exposition of it forms a part of the paper he read at the Convention of Religions held at Colombo on the occasion of the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary celebration there.]

**T**HE most practical contribution of Jainism is on the ethical side. Of course Jain metaphysics and ethics are closely connected, and the one consequently exercises a direct influence upon the other. In fact all Indian philosophers have treated both these branches of mental science together, as interrelated to each other, because in all metaphysical discussions the evolution of the soul is consistently kept in view, and pure abstract speculation is considered to be of no use.

The whole of Jain ethics centres round two of its metaphysical conceptions, namely, the theory of the soul and the theory of Karma, and a brief exposition of these two is therefore necessary in order to indicate the rationale of its practical injunctions. Jainism does not believe in any kind of all-pervading, universal and absolute Soul, but only in individual souls, each independent in itself and tenating a particular material body, and retaining its individuality even in the state of liberation. Though separate from matter, the soul is mixed up with matter in the state of bond-

age. In its purified or liberated condition the soul is a bundle of the brightest qualities such as Right Vision, Right Knowledge, Right Conduct, etc. These are, however, only potential in the case of a soul in bondage, and require to be made manifest in the course of the soul's evolution. The religion and ethics of the Jains are concerned with the practical methods to be adopted for aiding the soul in its evolution to perfection—in other words, with the means of elevating man from his Manhood to Godhood.

Jainism conceives the soul as having two sets of qualities which have to be carefully differentiated. The first set, known as Gunas, is its invariable concomitant, and consist of Right Vision, Knowledge, Conduct, etc., already mentioned before as potential in it even in the state of bondage. These are changeless, being inherent in the soul. In contrast to them are the changeable qualities called the Paryayas, which vary with each soul and bring about all the differences in the personalities of individuals.

These qualities that vary from individual to individual are to be accounted for by the theory of Karma. Karmas, according to Jainism, are forms of matter, different from, but mixed up with, the soul. Being atomic, they became separated from the soul as soon as their effects are worked out. For every activity—physical, vocal, mental or spiritual—some effect is produced upon the soul. These impressions are removed only after they have come to fruition by personal experience, good, bad, or indifferent as the case may be. These effects, left behind by previous actions and later on worked out through enjoyment or suffering, are called Karma. They are a form of matter and remain assimilated with the soul until they are eliminated in the course of the soul's evolution. Differences in capacity, stature of body, health, attachments, dispositions, temperaments, longevity of life and all other different qualities and endowments of individuals depend upon the Karmic atoms collected or acquired by them in their past births.

Jainism has worked out this theory of Karma in detail, giving us a systematic analysis of the reasons that lead to the assimilation of Karmas and the process that bring about their elimination. Karmas have, for this purpose, been divided into eight main categories and sub-divided into 158 manifestations. In the Jain scriptures the natures of these different forms of Karma have been fully depicted, the reasons for, and the way of, their assimilation with the soul well explained, and the power and period of their action in the various stages of development clearly indicated. The evolution of the soul is possible only

by stopping the assimilation of new Karmas (Samvara) and by getting rid of what have already been acquired (Nirjara). Jain ethics is concerned chiefly with this process of cleansing the soul of all Karmas, which is the only way of Moksha or liberation, the ultimate aim of the soul's evolution.

The different stages in the evolution of the soul have been shown in minute detail by Jain thinkers, and it has been pointed out that evolution as well as involution of the soul goes on side by side. The fulcrum on which the evolution of the soul depends is constituted of three grand principles, viz., not taking of life or injuring any one in any way (Ahimsa) ; restraint of senses and minds (Samyama) ; and austerities (Tapas). The principle of Ahimsa (doing no injury to life) has been carried to the extent of avoiding injury even to the feelings of others, and has its application to life in all forms, including human, animal and vegetable kingdoms. It has been laid down that one who has no power of giving life has no right of taking it away on any ground or pretext whatsoever. It goes without saying that strict abstinence from eating meat, eggs and fish is ordained. All other principles of good conduct leading to formation of character, such as truthfulness, honesty, celibacy, etc., are based upon the principle of Ahimsa in its broad application.

The organising of Panjrapoles for the protection of cattle, scattering of grain for doves, and giving bread to dogs and flour to ants are phases in the practice of this doctrine of Ahimsa. But more than all this, in the subjective world, one should not give oneself away to any passion such as anger, pride, hypocrisy, etc., be-

cause thereby one injures the susceptibilities of others, which one has no right to do.

Restraint of the senses of touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing and of mind is another point of great ethical importance. If one lets loose any of the senses, it is not possible to foretell where it will ultimately lead to, as these senses have got a peculiar way of making the soul engrossed in, and intoxicated with, sensuous objects, and thereby degrade the soul in place of helping it in its evolution. If one develops hankering after the pleasures of any of these senses, the downward march is certain, and it will only be a surprise if one succeeds in overcoming their degrading influence. The result of allowing oneself to be enslaved by the senses is repeated rebirths. In the same way, by not keeping the mind properly restrained, one is lead from one sin to another, and as mind is the main factor that governs the intensity of our passions, it has to be specially looked after. A closer study of our mind shows that, unless one knows how to curb it, a thought or sentiment constantly recurs inspite of one's desire to avoid it. Therefore, on the moral plane, restraint of mind has a comparatively higher value than that of the senses.

Austerities, both outward and inward, are meant for self-discipline. Fasts, or abstinence for a time or for ever from delicacies and other rigorous restrictions in respect of food afford samples of outward austerity. Service to all living beings, including animals and other lower creatures, penances for past sins, courtesy, respect for others and absorption in study, form some varieties of inward austerity. This doctrine of austerities

has its greatest use in the eradication of Karmic atoms, already assimilated with the soul, before they reach the period of fruition.

The soul has to pass through various stages of development in the course of its evolution from the lowest mundane state to its highest divine perfection. In this process it has to work out the Karmas in which it has enmeshed itself by its own misdirected activities, both of the nature of omission and commission. These stages are fourteen in number, and start with the state of Mithyatva 'engrossment in world' and end with the final divine state in which the soul becomes absolutely pure. In this last state all its extraneous Karmic matters are thrown out, and it attains to the state that was till now potential in it—the state of perfectly pure knowledge, vision and conduct. The attainment of this state is the ultimate goal of all the moral disciplines, consisting of rightly directed activities and various forms of abstinences. In this evolutionary process one has to conform to the rules of good conduct, and to the extent to which one acts up to the rules laid down in full detail, one works up one's evolution; but at the same time, if one disregards the rules of conduct so minutely laid down, one brings about the spiritual deterioration also.

In these stages of evolution the first is the conduct of a gentleman consisting of honesty, fair dealings, etc. In course of time a person advances to the state of Jain layman who accepts the right godhead, the right preceptor and the right system of belief. After passing through the various stages of a layman, he reaches the state of an ascetic with its lethargic and diligent states. While progress-

ing higher up in the progressive ladder, he gives himself up to meditation (Dhyana) in its various aspects, and after getting victory over four ultra-mundane categories of Karma out of the eight, he becomes omniscient (Kevalin). Thereafter, overcoming the remaining comparatively milder Karmas, he reaches the *summum bonum*.

Jain ethics deals with the various occasions of incurring and invoking good Karmas as well as bad ones, and for this purpose various categories thereof are given with their accurate resultant actions in the form of fruits. The most heinous forms of sin spring from killing, falsehood, sexual indiscretion and proprietary claim as well as from anger, pride, hypocrisy and avarice. Minor sins are caused by jealousy, back-biting, attachments, repulsions, quarrelsome nature, accusation, etc.

The main point to be kept in view in connection with these occasions of assimilating Karmas is that their intensity is measured by the activity of mind and the degree of its engrossment. In other words, two persons may outwardly be engaged in the same or similar type of activity, yet the intensity of their assimilation of Karma will be different according to the degree of their engrossment in their actions.

The outward flow of Karma can be stopped by taking recourse to meditation, practice of Yoga, renunciation, actively thinking of the various conditions of worldly existence, equanimity of mind and by various other similar means. Rules are laid down for each stage of development, and in laying them down the objective of getting rid of Karmas and their final and complete annihilation have been steadfastly kept in view.

It would be seen from the above that the ethics of Jainism are based on universally acceptable rules of conduct and aims at the upliftment of man from his manhood to godhood. The principle of universal brotherhood, appreciation of good qualities of others, sympathy for the suffering and indifference to the irremediable are its basic rules, elasticity is its grand prop, and the full recognition of the soul's freedom of will is its fundamental principle.

It should be stated in conclusion that the value of a system of ethics is to be judged by its capacity to produce real men of character who are always ready to help others in their struggle for betterment, and who are selfless and blemishes in their conduct. Judged by this standard, Jainism, with its detailed moral code and its fundamental principles of non-injury, self-control and austerity, will not be found wanting.

## NEWS AND VIEWS

### Temple of Bharata Mata

There is ample evidence in history that the Hindu mind as a rule has reacted to any strong emotion religiously. A notable example of this national trait we see in the novel temple conceived by the noble patriotism, and constructed with the lavish donation, of a distinguished citizen of Benares, Babu Shiva Prasad Gupta, and dedicated to Bharata Mata in that holy city itself. It is learned from the press that this generous gentleman who has suffered and sacrificed a lot for the motherland caught this unique idea more than two decades back, and that for the last five years twenty masons were busily engaged day after day at this monumental work. No image is housed in this temple except a relief map of India about 30 feet square, chiselled out of flawless marble with the utmost dimensional accuracy. The rivers, mountains, cities and even important towns and villages are exquisitely marked on the map; and the temple walls represent in colour the political past of India as well as its physical geography.

Under the groundwork is preserved what indicates a reverential attitude towards the past—a parchment containing several important documents including a list of sacred books of all Aryan religions, and a chronology of events for the last seven thousand years.

The map alone has cost a quarter lakh of rupees, and the temple as a whole bears the stamp of India's unity and affords an architectural symphony in which art, instruction and patriotism are beautifully combined.

Recital of all the four Vedas four times, Homa and twenty-five lakhs of Gayatrijapa imparted to the inauguration ceremony a great solemnity, and just before throwing open the doors of the shrine to all worshippers irrespective of creed, prayers of Hindus, Muslims, Parsees, Christians, Jains, Buddhists and Jews filled the sanctuary. "Let us all forget," said Mahatma Gandhi, who opened the temple, "our divisions and differences, sacrifice them at her (Mother India's) feet, and bring the purest of our services to her." Memorable words these.

### Its Cultural Significance

Concrete symbols exercise a very great influence, doubtless, in welding the thoughts of men for the noblest of purposes, even to-day as in the past. And the temple of Mother India shall have a far more exalted and incomparably useful purpose to serve, than the innumerable black statues, equestrian or otherwise, and the gigantic granite columns constructed at enormous costs in all the premier cities of India to the memory of the human fodder supplied to booming canons in far-off lands. The temple is certainly a splendid token of the people's political love for the mother land. But we are to be constantly wakeful that such adoration does not degenerate into a shell, hollow without any life inside, as in the case of hundreds of moss-grown, neglected temples in every nook and corner of India, which were all once consecrated with the greatest religious zeal and most emphatic faith. When the spirit leaves the heart, the symbol, its creation, is worse than useless. From very ancient times the common interest in her



mountains and rivers, cities and sanctuaries, seas and lakes, have linked the people of India into a sort of unity. By a tilting of values these factors are not occupying our attention as before, and in the present morass of communal, social and provincial rivalries, even western ideas of nationalism have not yet given any hopeful light of deliverance.

To us it seems the fundamental idea which this temple would impress upon the minds of all is a healthy sense of unity of the various cultural ingredients that have gone to make up the very being of Bharata Mata. When we call to our minds the slow and firm adoption of the whole intellectual culture of Hellas, Carthage and Rome by the enlightened States of the West, producing a common European culture, there is no ground for doubting the possibility of a complete amalgamation of the various linguistic cultures of India in the long run. But only conscious effort on a wide scale can hasten this consummation. The important vernaculars shall have to assimilate the central spirit which each represents distinctively. Unfortunately to-day the bards and saints of one linguistic area are seldom known, much less honoured and accepted, in another. Even the best

of our leaders shall have to admit defeat in their attempts to extirpate the antipathies existing between men of different provinces, communities and even avocations. Strange enough, even questions like Aryan and Dravidian, which are asleep in the pages of anthropological books and have absolutely no point to-day, are raked up with much ado.

It is up to the present generation to submerge these diversities which are the sources of our disunion. Invidious distinctions and offensive comparisons engendered by provincial conceit can never pave the way to national solidarity. The vernacular press perhaps stands in need of at least a mild castigation in this respect, for they are to some degree responsible for fanning up the spirit of regional apathy and self-conceit.

If the temple of Bharata Mata, which has been raised as the first symbol of India's intrinsic unity, proves a standing inspiration for all the children of this blessed land, from Kashmir to the Cape and Assam to Sind, in the realisation of this cultural, spiritual and political unity, it would be an ample recognition, by the people at large, of the valuable services of the founder of the present temple.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**Religion within the Limits of Reason alone :** *By Immanuel Kant. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson. The Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago, U.S.A. Price 3 dollars.*

Kant was the child of the *Aufklärung* ; and he was the herald of a revolution in Philosophy and Religion. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the church in

Germany had become a "creed-bound theological and sacramentarian institution." Christian faith had ceased to be a thing of the heart and had degenerated into a matter of correct ceremonials and observances. Kant was fearless in his criticism of hypocrisy in religious practices. Like all religious reformers he was unsparing in denouncing meaningless orthodoxy and ecclesiastical snobbery. His efforts were

directed to separate the form of religion from its substance, the transitory from the abiding, and to found religion on the rock of morality. He had "a profound insight into the human heart and offered what may well be accepted as a classic exposition of the place of morality in the religious experience."

In the *Religion* Kant pleads for the establishment of an *ethico-civil* state, a universal republic based on laws of virtue. Just as before the emergence of the politico-civil state man was in a state of Nature, he is now in an ethical state of Nature where the good principle, which resides in each man, is continually attacked by the evil which is found in him and also in everyone else; and this state he ought to leave in order to become a member of an Ethical Commonwealth. In order that the forces of separate individuals may be united for a common end there is need for a higher moral Being, a common law-giver or God. "An ethical commonwealth can be brought off," writes Kant, "only as a people under divine commands, i.e., as a people of God, and indeed under laws of virtue." Religion then consists in obedience to moral duties regarded as divine commands. The concept of the Deity thus arises from ethical requirements, from the need to postulate a might which procures for moral laws, as their final end, all the results conformable to them and possible in a world. Conceived in this manner, there can be only one religion, as there can be only one God.

Kant's view of religion is thoroughly moralistic. As the translators point out in their introduction his whole religious theory is anthropo-centric, not theo-centric, and despite his eulogy of theism as the belief in a "living God," his God is certainly, by all religious standards, related to the world and man in no vital way. He failed to comprehend that mystic communion with God which the devout have signalled as the essence of prayer and ceremonial worship. Kant's conception of religion is the result of a scientific age and a rationalistic mood. Though it does not soar to the heights of mystic experience, it does a valuable service by exposing the barrenness of false beliefs that pass for religious faiths.

The translators have performed their task of expounding one of Kant's mature

works with a very great amount of success. Their rendering is at once lucid and faithful. Their Introduction gives us a rapid and comprehensive survey of Kant's thought and the place of his *Religion* therein. Students of the Philosophy of religion will profit much by a careful study of this most profound work.

**The Living Religions of the Indian People :** By Nicol Macnicol, M.A., D.Litt., D.D. Published by Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 5 Russel Street, Calcutta. Pp. 324.

This lucid and interesting volume aims to give a brief account of Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism, Parsism and Christianity as they are lived by the Indian people to-day. The learned writer commits himself to a plausible neutrality in the preface when he says that "the aim of the book is not to institute comparison with the religions or to criticise them." But a close reading of the book will convince one that he has failed to keep up this attitude with regard to Hinduism. Although the writer is warmest in his exposition of Indian Christianity, whose first leader entered this land "in order that he might establish a Kingdom that was to be wholly spiritual," the largest number of pages in the book is directed to the "old unreformed impenitent Hinduism" which "is constantly climbing up from the lower level of fear and falling back again." From an unnamed authority he quotes that "Hinduism is a religion condemned to die but determined to live." We learn from the learned Doctor that "Bhakti indeed... is a prophecy and a forecast of the Christian revelation"—"a social religion"—and that the "Vishnu cult is the evangelical aspect of Hinduism." But the Christian scholars, "exploring affinities and exhibiting Christianity as Bhakti-marga and Jesus as the Avatar," are cautioned "to have before them, when they set out across the 'unplumbed salt estranging sea' of Hinduism on such a quest, the chart which will secure them against shipwreck." "For Hindu Pantheism is ready to recognise Christian ideas and absorb them." There is a lurking dread of the "subtle infection of Hinduism," its "invasive power" and "stubborn strength". The attitude revealed by such insinuating remarks is far from being one that can be characterised as impartial. It is a "capacious and adoptable

system." Admittedly it is a hard task for one to grasp the true spirit that underlies an alien culture and symbology. But it requires no extraordinary insight to understand that it is very unfair for an author, who claims to be honest and impartial, to institute a comparison between the best that is in one's own culture and religion, with the worst that is in those of another, and lead the uninformed readers to arrive at a decision on the basis of such comparison.

Among the many good things said about Indian Christianity, we read with joy that it has transformed the head-hunting savages of the Lushai Hills in Assam into earnest Christians, and that it has realised that its vocation is "to become a 'spiritual powerhouse' for the re-making of India". But when he turns to the "immense lumber-room of the spirit"—Hinduism—its "rude shrines" and "godlings," "varieties of demonolatry," and Sakti worship described as having a "gross origin" and its mother-goddesses judged as "belonging to an evil and dangerous category," we are confronted with a pathetic ignorance on the part of the author, inspite of his long experience among Indians as a missionary. Nor does the philosophical aspect of Hinduism find any favour with the Doctor. He lays down that Hindu monism cannot bear the fruit of 'morale and hope', and the testimony of a Hindu convert to Christianity is flaunted in order to impress that "the conception of an impersonal Being is ineffectual and ethically pernicious". He points out that to the Hindu "salvation comes not by righteousness but by knowledge". Of course, what the nature and condition of this knowledge is, is not even hinted. By knowledge the author understands "clear nothingness," and Moksha to him is a "bleak reward." However it is admitted that this "peril" of Hindu monism, which means to him an "anaemic," "anti-theistic" doctrine, and which is described as the "Pantheism that does not worship", "has coloured every aspect of Hindu belief," and has invaded even Islam, Sikhism and Parsism. The author is perhaps suggesting the "Christianisation of the Indian psychological climate" when he says that, until the modern Hindu "found the necessity of moralising Vedanta" and Swami Vivekananda "put blood into the

veins of Brahman," "to say 'Thou art that' had meant entry into a kingdom of darkness and stagnation and apathy." The audacity of this remark is only matched by his other wonderful suggestion, that "the ancient Siva," "Siva of the phallus and the burning Ghat" is to be traced to a "blood-drinking fiend," and that "Christianity that has laid its awakening grasp upon Hinduism" "is a life of continual sacrifice of one's dignity, wealth and health for the sake of others". It has reclaimed the labourers of the Andhra country from a "religion without depth or reality" to one that is "not ritual alone," and has given the Syrian Christians of Travancore a "striking superiority over the heathen in every moral excellence." "Honesty is the proof of real religion"—is a precious quotation he gives from the Bishop of Dornakal. Agreed. But shall we not apply it to the Church and East India Company too? But that is impious!

Nevertheless, the work is a highly readable one, and we would recommend it to our critically minded readers for the probing attention it pays to the gloom that hangs over a vast populace shutting away the essential truths of Hinduism—although that gloom is the result of the lowest standard of life and illiteracy India is still having, inspite of 150 years of government by the most forward Christian nation.

**The Secret of Ana'l Haqq:** By Khan Saheb Khaja Khan, B.A. Copies to be had of the Author, 69, Jani Jahan Road, Royapettah, Madras. Pages XXXIV+238. Price Rs. 2.

This scholarly work is an abridged translation of about three hundred sayings of Shaykh Ibrahim Guzur-i-Elahi of Shakarkote, Nagpur. The sayings are "short commentaries on the esoteric teachings of some verses of the Quran". *Ana'l Haqq* is the keystone of Islam as "Ayam Atma Brahma" is that of the Vedanta. *Dhat* (Supreme Consciousness) alone was in the beginning, and by self-introspection it became cognisant of its hidden potentialities (*ayan*). The *ayan* assumed form and shape and gave rise to things with attributes (*sifat*). Man and his faculties are all manifestations of the Absolute Reality which is ever pure (*dhat-i-bahat*) and beyond thought, guess and imagination. It is the

hidden of the hidden (*ghaybu'l ghayb*). God is light, and that light is hidden in the heart of man. Hence we read in Suratu du Dhariyat L 1-21, "And in your souls (there are signs) you do not see." *Dhat* (which displays *sifat*) manifests itself as *nur* (light), and then as *Ser* (cosmic consciousness), and then as *ruh* (soul), *qalb* (heart) and *qalib* (body). The little limited self (*banda*) is *adum* (nothing), and is to be annihilated. Love is *dhat* (Supreme Consciousness) in essence and is contained in neither knowledge nor revelation. The reality of each and every sensed and unsensed object is *dhat-i-bahat* (Absolute Reality). The appearances (*namud sing*) are sensed and not the *dhat* which is one. The differentiation between *dhat* and *sifat* is one of appreciation, and the suppositional diversity is a form of real identity (*ahad*). The multiplicity (*rasm*) that is the world of names (*asma*) and forms (*ayan*) is explained as being in the *tashbih* (saguna) and not in the *tanzih* (nirguna) state of *Dhat-i-bahat*, which latter is always hidden from all perceptive faculties. When the knowledge of oneness dawns (Tauhid is understanding one, seeing one, saying and being one), there will be no more partnership with God (*shirk*), and *ghayr* (the other than God) will be no more. *Ruh* is one and gnosis is its own quality, and as in this stage the knower and the known are the same, whoever knows God is God Himself. An A'riff is one who not only sees God in everything but sees Him as the Reality of everything. The prophets have adopted family life only under compulsion, and for the good of the society. Kafir is one who merges his little self in the *huyyuyat* (Brahmic State) of God, and this merging is not possible as long as we do not perceive the existence of our real ignorance in the face of God's knowledge (*marfat*). As is written, "They have believed in (one) God but still most of them are *mushriq* (dualists believing in *ghayr*)." A *mawakid* (unitarian) realises Self to be God, and the hair on his body stands on end and he cries out *Ana'l Haqq*, and in this stage he hears "I" "I" from his heart. That which leads to God is religion. All else constitutes this world, and forms obstacles on the way. But as *dhat* (consciousness) is the original source of everything, Amiru'l Mouminin Hazrat

Ali said, "Your remedy is in you ; you do not perceive. Your disease is from you ; you do not observe." We find signs of God's existence in every throb of life. *Al-kwathir rasul haqq* (every thought is a messenger from God). Yet the Satanic "I" is an obstacle, although the path to God is clear. By worship, chants and gnosis, one may realise God. *Mairaj* (ascent to God) is of two kinds—lesser and greater. The lesser *mairaj* is the coming out of the little self by *suluk* (the path of Islamic ordinances) where we get faint glimpses of divine glory (*mushahada*) and cut off *nafs* (individuality). The greater *mairaj* consists of *nafi* (negation of *ghayr* or the other than God) and *ithbat* (affirmation of *Haqq*), leading finally by complete annihilation of self to permanence in *Haqq*. As a Hadith has it, "A child is a Mussalman ; as he grows up he becomes an infidel by his creed and deeds." This saying is applicable as much to Christians and Hindus and others, as to Mussalmans to-day. It is written in all scriptures that the fire of love becomes the light of gnosis in the long run. If we are not inclined to practise gnosis, we can at least love our fellow men, and be wise.

These are some of the esoteric teachings found in the sayings herein translated into English by Mr. Khaja Khan. The introduction and glossary are immensely useful. As the book in a nutshell gives philosophic insight into Islam, it should be read by every one interested in the great religions of the world.

**Early Buddhist Scriptures : By Dr. E. J. Thomas.** Published by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., Broadway House, 68-74, Carter Lane, E. C., London. Pages XXV + 232. Price 10s. 6d. net.

Dr. Thomas is already famous as the author of "The Life of Buddha." In the present book he has given the English translation of some sixty passages from the Suttas and the Vinaya. The passages give in brief the chief characteristics of Buddhism. Buddhism as a phase of Hinduism has had remarkable developments both in and outside India. The doctrine is plain and simple. There is pain and it has a cause. By removing the cause of pain, we attain to a painless state (Nirvana). There is a way to remove the cause of pain. I am

not the body, I am not sensation, not perception or body consciousness. These are compound things, and all compound things are impermanent. Self is none of these. Such knowledge releases us from the body. This is true emancipation. A released person is "profound, immeasurable, hard to fathom and like the great ocean." Buddha thus denies the non-existence of self, yet never enters into metaphysical tangles, as his mission lies in showing the way out of misery to humanity. The self in repose and peace is steady, beyond time and space, and it is unsupported. And there is reason for this. "If there were not this unborn, unbecome, unmade, uncompounded, there would not be here an escape from the born, the become, the made, the compounded. There is no unsteadiness of the unsupported; when there is no unsteadiness, there is repose." (p. 111).

At a time when fanatical Brahmins were undermining, by their ignorance, the foundations of Vedic culture, Buddha (the Enlightened) held aloft the banner of Vedanta by denying (i) the privilege of caste; (ii) special knowledge possessed by the Brahmins; and (iii) the theory of animal sacrifice. Nirvana is not a state of nothingness but at first only freedom from pain and misery. The Buddhist religious life is lived as plunged in Nirvana. Only for the sake of this final emancipation is purity in morals, mind, views, doubts, knowledge and insight into the Path needed. Wisdom and virtue are the true pillars of Society and are enough to make a perfect man according to Buddha. On these bases has Buddhism stood safe all these years. The passages are fairly exhaustive, as they deal with the life of the founder, his enlightenment and teachings, and with discussions with persons of other schools as well as with rules regarding monks and nuns and lessons to laymen and women.

The book is altogether a valuable addition to English translations of Buddhist works.

**Our Trip to America :** By K. Natarajan, Editor, "Indian Social Reformer," Kamakshi House, Bondra, Bombay. Pp. 160.

This is a reprint of articles from the Indian Social Reformer. It records the experiences of the author in Europe and America when he went to Chicago to deliver the 1933

Haskell Lectures on "Social Movements in Modern India." The book is essentially a treatise on men and manners, and as such useful to visitors to foreign lands. Its literary quality is of a high order.

**History of the Gurdwara Shahidganj, Lahore :** By Ganda Singh, Khalsa College, Amritsar, The Punjab. Pp. 116. Price 4 as. only.

This welcome volume supplies a need of the day. Coming from the pen of an unbiased research student of history and "compiled from original sources, judicial records and contemporary materials," the book has a special value which no student of contemporary Indian history can or ought to ignore.

**A Preface to the Brahma-Sutras :** Nandhi Publishing House, Pondicherry. Pp. 71 (Pocket size). Price 12 as. only.

The three essays that comprise this little volume are excerpts from a larger work, 'The Commentaries on the Brahma-Sutras'.

The view-point and the terminology are Sri Aurobindo's. The style is unphilosophical and laboriously poetical.

**Srimad Bhagavat Gita, Chapter I :** Translation of the Text and Summary of the commentary in English by R. Vasudeva Rao. The Suddha Dharma Office, Mylapore, Madras. Pp. 57. Price 8 as; foreign 1 sh. or 25 cents only.

The book is "a summary (in English) of the commentary of Hamsa Yogi on the First Chapter of Bhagavat Gita."

**Maha Yoga :** As taught by Bhagavan Sri Ramana of Thiruvannamalai : By 'Who'. Published by Nature Cure Publishing House, Pudukottai. Price 3 as. Pp. 23.

Deals with some of the essentials of Advaita Vedanta.

(1) Bhagavan Sri Ramana ; (2) Universal Peace : Both by Ramana Dasa Sadananda, 138, Brodies Road, Mylapore, Madras.

The first booklet is a study of the Maharshi. The second one proposes real religion as the remedy for the malady of the explosive modern world.

**Defects of Sight : Its Causes and Cures :** *By B. L. Kamesvaran, B.Sc. Published by the Nature Cure Publishing House, Pudukottai.*

This small book costing three annas contains helpful suggestions that one may do well to try before running in for glasses.

**Rama Nama :** *By Mudda Visvanatham, Vyasa Kutceram, Melupaka, Yellaman-chelli, Dt. Vizag.*

In this tiny book the episode of Mahavira breaking the pearl-necklace, on failing to see the Lord's name in it, is dramatised.

**Hinduism from Gita :** *By Niran Nath Gurthu, L. M. S., F. T. S. Price Annas four. Copies to be had of the Author, Jodhpur. Pp. 160.*

**Advaita-Siddhanta-Sara-Sangraha :** *By Sri Narayana Ashrama, Panduranga Javaji. The Nirnaya Sagara Press, Bombay. Pp. 66. Price 6 annas only (Sanskrit).*

Every lover of Advaita Vedanta should read this little book which will give him a sound grounding in the system together with a power of meeting objections that are and have been generally raised against it. The editor got only one manuscript and he is not in a position to vouch for the correctness of the entire text, though he has not spared himself of the labour to make it as correct as possible under the circumstances. The book might be called an introduction to Advaita-Siddhi.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Vedanta Society, Providence

This year the work of the Vedanta Society of Providence was opened by Swami Akhilananda on 16th September. Throughout the season lectures were conducted as usual on Sundays, and two weekly classes were arranged for the study of Gita and Upanishads and for meditation. Regular interviews were always given to the students as well as to the Press. This year the radio station WPRO asked the Swami to speak regularly twice a week. At intervals the Swami also alternates with ministers in speaking over WJAR and WEAN for the morning devotions. All these talks continue throughout the year. In October of 1935, Swami Akhilananda visited the cities of Cleveland, Philadelphia and St. Louis, giving in each a series of three lectures on religion and psychology.

In the spring, on being urged by Philadelphia friends, he began speaking there Friday and Saturday of every week until the end of the season. In November and December the Metaphysical Club of Boston sent the Swami a special request to give a series of lectures there. He delivered four lectures on Sunday afternoons in each of the two months.

The birthdays of the Holy Mother, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Brahmananda were celebrated with music, lectures and worship. The birthday of Buddha, Christmas, Good Friday and Easter had

also their characteristic celebrations. In February the centenary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated. A detailed account of the celebration was published sometime back.

Swami Akhilananda also lectured at Brown University on the contributions of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda to Religion and Philosophy. This year the Swami was specially invited to lecture on Sri Ramakrishna to the Ministers' Club of Brown University, of which he is a member. He also spoke at other Associations of Ministers in the State, and again joined the meetings of the Union Ministers Association. He spoke many times to Jewish groups, and at different churches and clubs of Christ in the city and the State as well as in some of the cities of Massachusetts.

### The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York

Started in May 1933 with Swami Nikhilananda as its spiritual head, the centre has rapidly gained in influence and effectiveness, as indicated by an approximate total attendance of 18,000 people at the lectures and classes organised under its auspices.

At eleven o'clock on Sunday mornings, during the season, the Swami holds general lectures on the religion and philosophy of India, in all its numerous aspects. Besides the Sunday lectures, there are two regular evening classes on Tuesdays and Fridays, attended by an average of fifty-five students, and a special Wednesday class

on the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, limited to students that attend all the other services and classes. On Friday evenings, Swami Nikhilananda also gives instruction in concentration and meditation, in which people of all faiths and creeds participate.

Special celebrations are held at the Chapel at the time of the Durga Puja, Christmas, the Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and Buddha and at Easter, when the Chapel is beautifully decorated with flowers, a special program of music is arranged and sweets are distributed after the service. In further celebration of these occasions, dinners are given, where the spirit of friendship among the students and others interested in the Centre finds expression.

Open house is held by Swami Nikhilananda on the first Sunday afternoon of each month, giving the students an opportunity for more intimate contact with him and with each other. A lending library for the members of the Center makes many important books on Philosophy and Religion available to them.

In addition to his many other activities, Swami Nikhilananda has found time to speak before a number of groups outside the Center. Among these were the students at the Harvard Theological Seminary, St. Paul's Chapel at Columbia University, The Roerich Society, the Community Church of New York, the Hindusthan Association, All Souls Unitarian Church, the Union Church of Bay Ridge, the Men's Club of St. Marks-in-the-Bowery, and the Medical Center.

#### **Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Oregon**

The dedication of the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, an extension of the Vedanta Society of Portland, Oregon, was held with due ceremony, on the Ashrama grounds, at 11 a.m., Sunday, July 28, 1936. The Ashrama is an extensive property, covering 120 acres of hilly lands, commanding gorgeous views.

In his speech on the occasion of the dedication ceremony, Swami Devatmananda, the leader of the Portland Vedanta

Society, declared that the Ashrama had been conceived of and planned with the express object of presenting to the seekers the fullest opportunity possible to cultivate their spiritual life. There in the natural setting of quiet and solitude, away from the bustle and hurry of city life, they would be able to cultivate introspection and discipline, in order to bring out the Divine Perfection within, to its fullest manifestation.

#### **Sri Ramakrishna Centenary at Karachi**

Sri Ramakrishna Centenary was duly celebrated at Karachi during the 1st week of November by a strong Executive Committee formed for the purpose. An eight-day long convention was called, each day of which was devoted to the delineation of one or two of the world-faiths. The first day opened with three lectures on the Life and the Universal Message of Sri Ramakrishna, and the last day fittingly closed with the realistic declaration that human nature was after all the same everywhere, both in the East and in the West, and that throughout the ages man's aspirations and achievements were essentially the same, irrespective of colour, race or geographical boundary. The Committee was lucky in getting Prof. B. K. Sarkar of the Calcutta University to preside over most of the meetings and in having Rev. Haskell, Seth Gulamali Chagla, Prof. Bhagwat, the great Pali scholar of Bombay, and Dr. N. M. Dhalla, a great authority on Indo-Iranian culture, to represent respectively Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism. Over and above this series of lectures delivered in three different parts of the city, another series in Hindi, Sindhi, Gujrati and Marathi, all on Ramakrishna and his message, was organised in four other places of the city.

It is also noteworthy that besides organising the celebration, the Committee purchased an extensive plot of land with a nice bungalow and two out-houses on that at a cost of Rs. 16,000, and made a gift of it to the trustees of the Belur Math, as a permanent centre for the work of the Ramakrishna Order in the city.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

दुराचारा दुर्विचेष्टा दुष्प्रज्ञाः प्रियसाहसाः । असन्तस्त्वभिविख्याताः सन्तश्चाचारलक्षणाः ।  
पञ्चाद्रो भोजनं भुज्याद् प्राङ्मुखो मौनमास्थितः । न निन्द्यादन्नभक्ष्यांश्च स्वादु स्वादु च भक्षयेत् ।  
अतिथीनां च सर्वेषां प्रेष्याणां स्वजनस्य च । सामान्यं भोजनं भृत्यैः पुरुषस्य प्रशस्यते ।  
सायंप्रातर्भुज्याणां भोजनं श्रुतिचोदितं । नान्तराभोजनं दृष्टमुपवासी तदा भवेत् ।  
होमकाले तथा जुह्वन् ऋतुकाले तथा व्रजन् । अनन्यस्त्रीजनः प्राज्ञो ब्रह्माचारी तथा भवेत् ।  
स्वदेशे परदेशे वा अतिथिं नोपवासयेत् । काम्यकर्मफलं लब्ध्वा गुरुणामुपपादयेत् ।  
दर्शने दर्शने नित्यं सुखप्रश्नमुदाहरेत् । सुतैः स्त्रिया च शयनं सह भोज्यं च वर्जयेत् ।  
मानसं सर्वं भूतानां धर्ममाहुर्मनीषिणः । तस्मात् सर्वेषु भूतेषु मनसा शिवमाचरेत् ।

They are known as bad people whose conduct and understanding are bad, and who love rash and evil acts. A man of character is known by his noble and virtuous behaviour. One should sit at meals after washing hands, feet and mouth. Facing the east and observing silence, a person should eat with relish, uttering no word of condemnation for the meat and drink served to him. It is praiseworthy on the part of one to share the same food with his guests, servants and all other members of the family. The scriptures have enjoined meals twice, one in the morning and the other in the evening ; meals in the interval are not sanctioned. Observance of this rule is as good as *Upavasa* (religious vow of abstinence from food). Performing worship at fixed times, living a regulated sex life, and observing strictly the rule of monogamy, a wise man acquires the merit of *Brahmacharya* (religious celibacy). Whether in one's own place or in a strange land, one must not send a guest hungry. When a desired object comes into one's hand, it should first be offered to the elders. Each day, on meeting another, one should greet him with a "how-do-you-do." One should not share the same bed with one's children and wife, nor should one eat from the same dish with them. The wise hold that righteousness is essentially an attitude of mind ; therefore works done for the good of others should proceed from one's heart.

Mahabharata, Santi Parvas, CXCI 2, 6, 9, 10, 11 15, 19½, 24½, 31.



## HINDU VIEW OF LIFE

[Man has to discover a meaning for himself in the cosmic scheme, if he is to live a harmonious and effective life. An attempt is made in the following paragraphs to state what guidance Hindu culture has to offer one in this discovery.]

### I

**L**IFE may be faced in two ways, either as an affair of the moment, or as a problem having a significance for eternity. The first is the way of the animal, and is derived from its entire pre-occupation with physical life as it reveals itself to the senses. When the instinctive urges are felt, or when the primordial cravings of the body demand satisfaction, the animal strives with all its might and main until satiation dulls the fitful intensity of its life. It lives practically oblivious of the past and the future, and but for the unconscious wisdom of instinct and the systematic functionings of biological laws, there is no intelligent thought process in it which links the two poles of time. Hence, for the animal, life is only a fact, and not a problem, which it becomes in the case of man. For man is the offspring of Mother Earth and Father Heaven, as a Greek philosopher of old opined, and if by virtue of his maternal inheritance he shares the animal's slavery to the instincts and pre-occupation with the moment, his paternal inheritance tends to arouse in him yearnings and perceptions which create for him new problems, conflicts and ways of development. With the dawn of conscious thought and ethical sensibility, the simple and naive attitude of looking at life as a matter of the moment gives place to a philosophic outlook that comprehends life in re-

lation to its past and its future, suggests new difficulties and conflicts, and seeks new ways of overcoming the same.

To indicate the nature of this conflict, it may be remarked that it relates to the very fundamental nature of life and experience. Of the two factors of intelligence and inertness present in the world, which is the primary? This mighty universe, extending in space and time far beyond our capacity to measure—is it self-subsistent, or does it depend on an Intelligent Power transcending it? Is the world the product of a slow evolution, or has it sprung from an act of will? Can existence be reduced to a unity, or is plurality the very basis of its structure? Is infinity a mere figment of the human imagination, or is it really the background of the finite? Is life merely temporal in its significance, or does it extend beyond its worldly span? These are some of the riddles that puzzle the thought of man, and present life as a problem to the intellect. In the matter of conduct also the questions that confront life at the human level are no less puzzling. Is our will free, or is it determined and dominated completely by external circumstances? Are the notions of sin and virtue real? Is life in the world an end in itself, or is it only a means to a goal? How is man to adjudicate between the instinctive craving for sense-indulgence and the ethical demand for self-control? Is

the life of the world to be enjoyed, or is it to be shunned? Is there a conflict between the ideals of the ascetic and the citizen, and if so, which is preferable? Between the claims of individualism and collectivism, and egoism and altruism, how is man to arrive at decisions?

These are some of the major questions that crop up as the intellectual and the ethical faculties of man begin to mature. They make the process of living much more strenuous than when one lives only for the moment. For, we then experience in the fields of thought and morality—the distinguishing features of man—the violent conflict of ideals as indicated above. From one side comes the prompting of baser motives that have their root in the flesh; from the other is felt the call of conscience and imaginative insight that have their origin in the higher self of man. With every beat of his heart man feels the urge to live exclusively for himself, but every time he decides to do so, he hears also a faint voice whispering that life is worthwhile only if it is lived for the sake of others. Man finds that the impetuous claims of the flesh have to be attended to, if he is to live at all in this world; he also learns by experience that in the long run he cannot disregard with impunity the sublime voice of ideals too. Thus the complication of life at the human level consists in the development of this conflict. But an effective and happy life is impossible when there is civil war in the mind. The conflict between the two interests have in some way to be settled by subjecting one to the other. Culture in all human societies must therefore include something more than technol-

ogy, whose main function is only to give us mere things and provide us with more of creature comforts. It is this higher aspect of culture that we call a view of life, and its importance lies in the fact that it is the answer of a culture to man's demand for a solution of the conflict between the ideals and realities of life, so that he may be saved from the strain and stress of such conflict and helped to live a useful and effective life, culminating in the maximum development of his personality.

Each culture has its own characteristic view of life that has helped its adherents to resolve their inner conflict; but Hindu culture, as one noted for its philosophic depth and power of persistence, has, in this respect, a contribution to make, which may be of value not only to its avowed followers but to all earnest inquirers after truth. We shall consider a few of its salient features in their application to the philosophic and ethical problems that confront man in all cultures and times.

## II

The most outstanding feature of Hindu thought is its insistence on the unity of existence. This assertion may look rather strange to one who is accustomed to think of Vedanta or higher Hindu thought as divided into the three well-known sects—Advaita (monism), Visishtadvaita (qualified monism), and Dvaita (dualism). Although these schools of thought have been at feud with one another, for one who is more interested in discovering the points of agreement than of difference, the trend towards unity which all these systems share in common will be quite clear. That Advaita or monism

is essentially a gospel of uncompromising unity will be disputed by none. The Visishtadvaitin may not go so far with the Advaitin, but he accepts unity in diversity. For him the universe is one Organism, with the living and non-living beings constituting its body, and with God as its soul energising it from within, both in its totality and in its individuality. Even in the Vedantic dualism or Dvaita, the tendency to unity appears in the doctrine that the universe is an existence dependent on God. Non-Vedantic forms dualism look upon the universe either as an evolute of a primordial matter independent of the Spirit, or as the product of a 'nothing' which is apart from God. But in Vedantic dualism the universe does not imply any entity up against God, but only an existence which is, because He is, and thus derives its being exclusively from Him. The tendency towards unity is here quite apparent. Moreover the doctrine of God as an immanent presence, which forms a common heritage of all shades of Hindu thought, is only an indirect way of asserting unity without doing violence to devotional sentiment; for immanence implies the omnipresence of the Supreme Spirit; for from Him it is in some way one with all can be really omnipresent in the true sense of the term.

The characteristic way in which Hindu thought affirms this unity is also remarkable. "Thou art That" (Tat Tvam Asi)—is perhaps the most remarkable description of God in the history of religious literature; for it is at once an argument for the existence of God, an assertion of the unity of existence and an illuminating characterisation of that unity. To

take only the last point here for consideration, it tells us that the assertion of unity does not imply a reduction of all existence into a fine form of matter but an interpretation of it in terms of the highest that is known to us, namely, our own innermost self, by virtue of which man is what he is—a centre of consciousness, personality and appreciation of higher values. Hence to assert the unity of existence in terms of the human self is to give a sensible and understandable description of the Ultimate Principle of the Universe as Spirit—as the Transcendental Personality (Uttama Purusha) conserving the highest values of life without being subjected to any of the shortcomings of the limited persons who are His imperfect manifestations.

### III

The apparently limitless world of conscious and unconscious existences owes its being entirely to the Supreme, and only an existence that comes into manifestation, in Him it rests and in Him it dissolves. In Nature we find that the birth, growth and death of things proceed in a cyclic order. The tree sprouts from the seed, it is in the state of manifestation for a time, and then it decays, leaving behind it the seeds into which it has withdrawn itself as a potentiality, and from which it eventually springs up again into life. The cosmos too is like that, according to the Hindu world-view. Srishti or creation is the manifestation of the universe from the Supreme Being in whom it has been lying dormant for a time. At His will the creative energy activates the seeds of the world, and they burst forth, according to the laws of evolu-

tion, into these systems of suns and planets of unthinkable dimensions. For a long stretch of time it continues to be in its manifested condition, providing opportunities for living beings to gather experience and perfect their personalities. This is the state of *Sthiti* or world-maintenance, and from this state it again lapses into the condition of latency known as *Pralaya*. The universe does not exist then as a gross phenomenon of touch, taste, colour and sound, but it is enfolded in the Supreme Being as the world-seed from which the next creation springs eventually. Thus in the Hindu world-view creation does not mean a new beginning but only the periodic recurrence of the eternal world-tendencies, now coming into patency, next relapsing into latency and so on for ever. The immensity of space and time, and the rigorousness of the causal law are fully recognised in this world-view.

This world, which is thus periodically manifested and withdrawn, provides the field for *Jivas* or limited personalities to gather experience and perfect themselves. The *Jiva* himself is a spark from the Divine but has from a beginningless past forgotten his kinship with the Supreme Being. His consciousness is therefore clouded by ignorance, and until he regains the memory of his real nature and affinities, he gravitates towards the changeful world with its limited joys and sorrows, its petty loves and hates. The world is thus the trap of the *Jiva* but is also the means for his ultimate self-realisation.

He receives embodiment in it not according to the whim or fiat of an autocratic will but under the guidance of the law of *Karma* which

is the moral counterpart of the law of causation. This law is not tantamount to a gospel of fatalism as its critics often put it. It is a generalisation of the two great truths of history that the past impresses itself on the present, and that the present moulds the course of the future. As no individual is a sudden intruder into the world at the bidding of a whimsical God but the inheritor of an immemorial past, his initial status and endowments, both mental and physical, are determined by his achievements in past embodiments. But he is the architect of his future, and the use or abuse of his original endowments is entirely in his own hands. Thus the law of *Karma* is an assertion of freedom coupled with an account of the difference in the capital endowments of life.

#### IV

Guided by this law of conservation of moral energies, man passes from one birth to another, enjoying and suffering, until final illumination releases him from this cycle of births and deaths. To one who is caught in the cycle of transmigration, there are no doubt many woes, but it also offers side by side many joys, so that to characterise it as a vale of sorrow and stigmatise this conception of life as merely pessimistic will be quite incorrect. But one may get dissatisfied with its constant alternation of the sweet and bitter fruits of life, and thus learn to view it from an angle of vision quite different from that of pain and enjoyment, or of pessimism and optimism.

For *Samsara*, as this cycle of births and deaths is called, is then discovered to be a process with a great purpose, namely, the perfecting of the

soul and the restoration of it to its divine status. We find in ourselves so many strong desires which fail to meet with adequate satisfaction in one embodiment. Moreover the layers of impurity in most of us are so many, and the progress we make towards their eradication is so slow, that many of us find ourselves only where we were, if not worse, by the close of our life. Hence to every one who attaches eternal value to life, the conception of repeated embodiments as the necessary preparation for the final purification and salvation of the soul would appear reasonable and convincing.

At the beginning of this essay we stated that the main function of a view of life is to harmonise the conflicts that spring into prominence in the wake of the rational and ethical faculties, and to provide the guidance of a dominant purpose to the energies of man, so that he may be helped to live a harmonious and effective life leading to the maximum development of personality. The doctrine of Samsara, with its allied theories of cyclic evolution, rebirth and emancipation, is the answer that Hindu culture offers to this demand of the human soul. A man may be said to have lived truly, and in keeping with his dignity as a human being, only if he steers the boat of his life to the ultimate goal of emancipation—the attainment of the perfect purity of soul and the recognition of its kinship with the source of all Power, Wisdom, and Holiness. In this state of emancipation (Mukti) the spell of nescience that has involved the soul in the cycle of births and deaths is broken. Its natural perfection, purity, knowledge and bliss manifest in their fullness. It realises its true

relation with the universe and its Source, the Supreme Spirit. It is freed once for all from the cycle of births and deaths.

## V

A world-view of this type reveals life in the perspective of eternity, and provides a basis for reconciling the claims of the present with the demands of an endless future. There is of course the other alternative of repudiating the faint voice of eternity within us, and forming a theory of life based entirely on a sensuous interpretation of experience. This is the naturalistic world-view. In India the only school of thought that adopted such a philosophy is that of the Charvakas, but they have exercised very little influence on Hindu life. A world-view, purely materialistic in outlook, can yield only one result when pushed to its logical conclusion. It ends in a denial of all meaning for life, and thus lands one in the absolute darkness of pessimism, with no redeeming feature whatever. But man cannot admit himself to be a meaningless entity, nor can he be a thoroughgoing pessimist; for that makes an ethics of suicide inevitable. So the vulgar materialist makes his life meaningful by dedicating it to mere sense pleasures, and the man with a strain of idealism in him, by invoking the high sounding names of disinterested quest of knowledge and service of humanity. The sensualist no doubt can find enough to do for a time, and get over the conflict of the infinite *versus* the finite, the spirit *versus* the senses or altruism *versus* egoism, by denying the former category altogether. But the consequences of his philosophy are sufficiently omi-

nous to make any serious thinker wary of it. Humanitarianism and pursuit of knowledge, without any commitment regarding the ultimate nature of things or even a frank denial of the ultimacy of values, have often been advocated by reputed thinkers in modern times. But such thinkers never have had any large body of responsible followers noted for their saintliness, purity and spirit of self-abnegation, as we find in the case of founders of world religions. Their followers have come mainly from the vulgar rabble, whose attraction for their systems consists not so much in their ethical idealism as in the applicability of their intellectual outlook as a justification of their own degenerate hedonism. This shows that there is something in-

herently weak in their argument, a strain that seems to contradict the very workings of human thought. To plead for a recognition of the higher values of life without admitting a principle for conserving them for eternity is like building a sky-scraper on a foundation of sand.

A spiritual world-view is therefore absolutely necessary if the life of man is to be rationalised at a higher level of thought, and we claim that in the Hindu doctrines of God, soul, cyclic nature of world process, Karma, Samsara and emancipation, we get the simplest and the most rational system of thought that can give the necessary intellectual scaffolding for man's spiritual growth and ethical endeavour.

## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

*By A Disciple*

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was both wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped as a divine personage by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of every-day life.]

**A**T one time I stayed in Calcutta for three weeks. I went to see the Holy Mother and said to her, after salutation, "Mother, I intend to stay in Calcutta for some time. I understand that the devotees can see you only twice a week. I shall see you now and then if you approve of it."

Mother: Oh, you must come. Whenever you feel like coming, do so; and send word to me beforehand.

One day I said to the Mother, "Oh, Mother, I do not have any peace

of mind; it is always restless. I have not been able to get rid of passion." The Mother looked at me for a long time without winking. She did not say anything. I felt repentant on looking at her face, and sorry that I had talked about it with her. Afterwards I came to see M.\* and said to him, "You have served Sri Ramakrishna a great deal. Please put your hand on my head. It is heated."

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\* Master Mahashaya, one of the intimate householder disciples of Sri Ramakrishna.

**M. :** What do you mean ? You are a child of the Holy Mother. She loves you a great deal. Why should you beg anything from me ? Did she not look at you steadily ?

**Disciple :** Yes, and for a long time.

**M. :** Then why should you worry any more ? One swims in eternal bliss if one gets the grace of the Holy Mother.

He repeated the last sentence thrice with great enthusiasm. I then realised the meaning of the steady gaze of the Holy Mother. My mind became peaceful.

One day very early in the morning, I went to see the Holy Mother with my daughter and wife. I said to her, "Mother, they cannot come here frequently. They will stay here for the whole day. I shall come in the evening to take them back. The Mother agreed to this. My wife had no vermilion on her forehead, which is the symbol of the married woman living with her husband. One among the woman devotees asked her why she did not use the vermilion on her forehead. The Holy Mother said, "It does not matter at all. She has such a nice husband." The Mother herself pasted a little vermilion on her forehead. My wife thought that she would be blessed if she could be of some personal service to the Mother, with her permission. After a little while the Holy Mother said to her, "Come here, my daughter. Put some oil on my head." As she was combing her hair, my wife thought that it would be a great thing if she could take a few hairs from the Holy Mother's head. The Mother at once read her mind and said with a smile, "Here you are. Take this hair." She gave her a few hairs from the comb. One woman devotee asked the

Mother about my wife. The Mother said, "She is the wife of Suren Ranchi. Suren has deep faith in Sri Ramakrishna." That day the Mother took my wife bathing in the Ganges with her. We had taken a new piece of cloth and a towel with us for the Mother. Her attendants put them in the bundle of new cloths, but the Mother picked them out from the bundle and took them with her to the Ganges. After the bath she gave a piece to a Brahmin and asked him to paste sandal on the forehead of my wife. At the meal time she gave her Prasadam from her own plate, and afterwards she asked my wife to massage her feet gently while she was enjoying a little siesta in the afternoon. My baby daughter lay on a blanket and made it dirty. My wife was about to wash the blanket when the Mother snatched it from her hand and washed it herself. My wife asked her, "Mother, why should you wash it ?" The Mother said, "Why not ? Is she a distant relation ?"

In the evening I went to the Udbodhan office. I found Upen Babu alone there. I came to learn that the other members of Udbodhan had gone to the celebration at the Vivekananda Society. I myself went upstairs and prostrated before the Mother, when she said to me, "Look here, my child, nobody is here now. To-day the devotees will come to pay their respects to me. Please bring them upstairs and also distribute the Prasadam among them." I carried out her wishes. The Mother said, "From today you belong to my own family. You brought my devotees upstairs and you also distributed Prasadam among them."

**Disciple :** Why ? Am I not one of your children ?

Mother : Yes, that is true. You are one of my children.

Then turning to my wife she said, "My child, all these are my children, but I have a special relationship with some of them. I have a special relationship with your husband. Don't you see that he always comes here ? He is so near to me." Later on she gave me Prasadam and a betel leaf, and said, touching my chin very tenderly, "Now you should not be afraid of anything. Our relationship has become very natural. This is your last birth." I said, "Yes, Mother, I feel quite at ease before you. This is due to your grace."

My wife made a meditation carpet for the Holy Mother and took it with her. The Mother was very much pleased to get it. She showed it to every one and said, "Look what a nice carpet my daughter has made for me ! " Even a trifling thing from the devotees gave her such great pleasure.

At one time I went to Jayrambati with four other devotees. We intended to reach our destination before dark. We had a local man as our porter. The road was known to me, but near the house of the Mother I missed the way. Even the porter became confused. Gradually it grew dark. My companions were restless. We all felt tired and did not know what to do. I spread a blanket in a bamboo grove. I felt a sort of annoyance and said to myself, "Well, Mother, why should we alone seek you ? Will you not seek for us too ? " Just at that time we discovered that Rashbehary Dada and Hemendra, the two attendants of the Mother, arrived in the grove with a lantern. We were surprised to see them there on

such a dark night. They said, "We never thought of coming by this way. It is a happy coincidence that we have followed this direction, otherwise you would have been in trouble." We came to the Holy Mother's place. After we had saluted her, she asked us suddenly if we had taken a roundabout way. I admitted it.

One day in the course of our conversation I said to the Mother that a certain monk had been giving initiation to various people. The Mother said, "They are professional teachers, but their instruction also will benefit people. Men generally are indifferent to spiritual life, so even their instruction will persuade them to think a little of God. If they are sincere, they will ultimately come here. Spiritual teachings are distributed here without stint. No one with the slightest sincerity will be refused here.

The Mother initiated my four companions, one of whom was rather young in years. She said to him, after the initiation, "Repeat the holy word one hundred and eight times." But that did not satisfy the boy. His ambition was to repeat the word one hundred thousand times. The Mother smiled a little and said, "Yes, you think this now, but I am afraid it will not be possible for you to do so. You have so many things to do. It is undoubtedly a greater help for your spiritual progress if you can repeat the holy word more times."

One day I gathered a few lotuses for worshipping the Holy Mother. She said, "Take a few to the Temple of Simhavahini and leave a few here." One of the devotees said, "We want to worship you with all the flowers."



Mother : That's all right. Here are my feet if you want to worship them.

I said to the Mother, "Mother, Sri Ramakrishna used to say that pure devotion is the essence of spirituality. Please bless me so that I may attain to that devotion." A few other devotees were seated near by. The Mother was quiet. One by one the devotees left the place, and when I was alone with her, the Mother said to me, "Is it possible for all to get that pure devotion? But you will have it."

The Mother said to Radhu, "Here is your elder brother. Take the dust of his feet." I thought, 'How is that possible? I am a Kayastha.† But at once the idea flashed upon my mind, 'The Holy Mother will never do anything which is not good for me.' Then we saluted each other.

Another day the Holy Mother said to me at Jayrambati, "My child, I have been wrestling as it were, for the whole day. The devotees are coming in a stream. This body cannot stand it any more. Through the grace of Sri Ramakrishna and also

by creating an artificial attachment regarding Radhu, I have managed to keep my mind on this physical plane." This reminded me of a similar incident in Sri Ramakrishna's life. He also used to drag down his mind to this phenomenal world by creating artificial desires for water or a puff of tobacco. The Mother kept her physical body, in spite of much suffering, only for the welfare of the many.

At the time of taking leave I said to the Mother, "Mother, you have millions of children like me, but I have not another mother like you." At this her eyes became moist and with infinite tenderness she kissed me, touching my chin.

One day I went to see the Holy Mother at the Udbodhan office. After I had saluted her, she prayed to Sri Ramakrishna with folded hands, "O Lord, fulfil all their desires." I was startled, and said, "How can it be so, Mother? It would be a terrible disaster if all our desires were fulfilled. There are so many evil desires in our mind." The Mother said with a smile, "You need not be afraid of that. Sri Ramakrishna will do unto you only what is good and necessary for you. Do what you are doing. Don't be afraid of anything. We are here to protect you."

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† An epithet of the Divine Mother.

‡ One of the lower castes among the Hindus. Radhu belonged to the highest caste of Brahmins.

## RELIGION OF ADVAITISM

By *Surendra Nath Mitra, M.A., B.Sc., L.T.*

(Continued from last issue)

[Mr. Mitra is an old contributor to the *Vedanta Kesari*. In the issue of this Magazine for July, 1935, he wrote an article on the metaphysical aspect of Advaitism. In the present one he deals with its religious aspect. Modern thought tends to show that the religious quest of man is ultimately a quest after the supreme and enduring value. For one conversant with these tendencies, Mr. Mitra's discussion of Advaitic theory from the point of view of supreme value, as expressed in the concept of Ananda, will appear to be a very fruitful method of studying Indian philosophy. In this instalment the religious implications of the doctrine of Maya and the Advaitic conception of divine love are specially treated.]

### IV

**M**ETAPHYSICALLY considered, however, these characteristics (*Sat*, *Chit* and *Ananda*) are not to be regarded as attributes, but identical with each other as well as with that in which they are figuratively imagined to inhere. Even by ascribing suitable imaginary attributes it may be possible to serve the practical purpose of clarification of an idea, by suggestion. A poet, for example, would often suggest the idea of the beauty of a face by attributing to it figuratively the beauty of a lotus or of the full moon. In Advaitic metaphysics the duality of attribute and thing is overcome by rightly regarding attributes and things as identical with the transcendental basic principle which appears phenomenally split up as the attributes and the things. Strictly speaking, the Brahman of Advaitism is incapable of being defined, since definitions are possible only through characteristics, which are necessarily vitiated by the limitations of the functioning of the mind, and which must involve dualism too. Hence, *Sat*, *Chit*, and *Ananda* are to be regarded as the essential characteristics of Brahman

in the metaphorical sense, that it is by means of these, together with their inherent and inevitable tendency to develop without limit, that we are able to transcend the limitations of phenomena, and to be brought in communion with Brahman, *now and here*, directly recognising it as identical with our own self. Brahman is not *Sat*, *Chit*, and *Ananda*, taken in their ordinary senses, but their ultimate conclusion—their very non-dual self. Thus, the formulation of Brahman as *Sachchidananda* is, no doubt, a limitation; but, nevertheless the nobility of the concept lies in its containing an excelsior which makes us fully conscious of all limitations and thus enables us to live above all the superimpositions (*upaadhi*) of Maya.

The characteristic of *Sat* as applied to Brahman means the total negation of non-existence, including the limitation imposed upon Being by the continual transcendence of everything that exists phenomenally. The meaning of the characteristic, *Chit*, is the total negation of inertia or unconsciousness imposed upon Brahman not only by material bodies which appear as non-living, but also by the

forms of obscure intelligence and pleasure in plants as well as by the continuous flux in the stream of consciousness of animals. Similarly, the significance of the characteristic, *Ananda*, is the absolute negation of all disvalues imposed upon Brahman, not only by positive evils, but also by the temporariness, quantitative insufficiency and monotony of every phenomenal value as well as by the potency of some apparent and deceptive values to be followed by undesirable consequences. From the Advaitic standpoint the true nature of a negation or *Abhava* is rightly regarded as identical with that to which the negation is applied.<sup>7</sup>

### V

Characteristics opposite to those applied to Brahman, *viz.*, the characteristics of non-existence, inertness, and disvalues, comprise the nature of *Maya*, or cosmic nescience, which imposes all the limitations on Brahman, or, for the matter of that, on

<sup>7</sup>The great intellectual giant, Madhusudana Saraswati, has discussed this point more comprehensively, with an admirable brevity and accuracy, characteristic of his genius, in the following three sentences :—

“न च एवं सत्यत्वमपि तत्र न स्यात्, तथा च ‘सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्त’ मित्यादिश्रुतिव्याक्रोप इति वाच्यम्; अधिकरणातिरिक्ताभावानभ्युपगमेन उक्त-मिध्याभावरूपसत्यत्वस्य ब्रह्मस्वरूपविरोधात् । एतेन स्वप्रकाशत्वाद्यपि व्याख्यातम्; परप्रकाशत्वाभावो हि स्वप्रकाशत्वम्, कालपरिच्छेदाभावो नित्यत्वम्, देशपरिच्छेदाभावो विभुत्वम्, वस्तुपरिच्छेदाभावः पूर्णत्वमित्यादि । तथा च भावभूतधर्मानाश्रयत्वेऽपि ब्रह्मणः सर्वधर्माभावरूपतया न कायानुपपत्तिरिति सर्वमवदातम् ॥”

Advaita-Siddhi; Chapter I; discussion of the second characteristic in the definition of falseness; sentences 49-51.

the true nature of our selves.<sup>8</sup> Brahman is reflected in (or, as suggested by William James, refracted through) *Maya*, as it were, so that *Maya* mixing up its own characteristics with the image of Brahman shows the image split up into phenomena. The non-existence of *Maya* mixing up with the existencial aspect of the image of Brahman appears as something which partakes of the nature of each, *i.e.*, which is neither totally existing nor totally non-existing but which is partially both, *i.e.*, as the mutability and the transiency of the world. The inertness of *Maya* mixing up with the consciousness aspect of the image of Brahman appears to limit it or to cover it up in various degrees, which may be divided into three main classes represented by the minerals, the vegetables, and the animals, although in each class, again, there are numerous other differences in degree represented by species and individuals. The functions of the sense-organs, too, represent consciousness because they help us to have a knowledge of objects, although this consciousness is of a lower degree than that represented by what is known as the mind. Light, and even brightness of material bodies, also, represent consciousness, though of a still lower order, since these help us in getting a perceptual knowledge of distant objects, without bringing the objects in contact with the organ of vision. The disvalues of *Maya* mixing up with the *Ananda* aspect in the image of Brahman makes it appear as limited values of various orders. Where

<sup>8</sup> “असत्ता जाड्यदुःखे द्वे मायारूपं त्रयं त्विदम्”

<sup>9</sup> Panchadashi; 15:23.—“Non-existence, unconsciousness, and pain—these three constitute the nature of *Maya*.”

the disvalues of Maya predominate, they cover the Ananda aspect so much that we experience only disvalues of different orders. Pure inertness and pure disvalues are really nothing, since they are identical with absolute non-existence which is the very essence of Maya. The non-existence of Maya in the most prominent form is experienced in the absurd figments of imagination, such as the horn of a hare, or the son of a barren woman, because in such cases there is no mixture of Maya with the image of Brahman.

Thus, we see that the phenomenal world, according to Advaitism, is not absolutely nothing, but a mixture of Maya with Brahman, which appears as broken up into aspects or elements due to its reflection (or refraction) in Maya. The elements of being, consciousness and values in the phenomena are derived from Brahman, while the elements of non-existence, inertness and disvalues belong to Maya.<sup>9</sup> The whole of the phenomenal world is not Maya or false, as some people erroneously imagine Advaitism to assert, but only a part of it. In the phenomenal world the characteristics of Brahman appear more or less obscured due to various kinds of confused blending with the characteristics of Maya, just as to one's ears the sound of reading by one's own son appears indistinct, being mixed up with those of a multitude of other students reading together with him.<sup>10</sup>

In the phenomenal world the elements of existence, consciousness and

values appear in different orders in different places and times. Hence, Maya cannot be imagined as homogeneous. It may be imagined as consisting of three constituents—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—each of which is inert in itself, being a part of pure Maya. The constituent of Sattva, according to its degree of dominance, reflects Brahman as Chit and Ananda in various orders which may be arranged in a hierarchy of excellence depending on the relative permanence as well as the development and richness of knowledge, emotions and will. The ingredient of Rajas, according to its degree of domination, reflects the existence, derived from Brahman, as *movement* in various orders. This movement varies from the blind working of mechanical energy to the selfish activities in pursuit of disvalues, *anartha* or *dukkha*, which, masked under veneers of Ananda derived from the “virtual image” of Brahman, appear as alluring values totally confined within the world of phenomena, and thus obstruct communion with Brahman by making us live from moment to moment within the confining walls of the lunatic asylum of Maya. Similarly, the element of Tamas, according to its degree of dominance, reflects the existence, derived from Brahman, as *rest* of various orders. This rest ranges from the stationariness of stone to the laziness and lassitude of the body,

10 अयेतृवर्गमयस्य पुत्राद्ययनशब्दवत् ।

भानेऽप्यभानं भानस्य प्रतिबन्धेन युज्यते ॥

प्रतिबन्धोऽस्ति भातीति व्यवहारहस्तुनि

तं निरस्य विरुद्धस्य तत्स्योत्पादनमुच्यते ॥

तस्य हेतुः समानाभिहारः पुत्रवचनिश्रुतौ ।

इहानादिरविशेष व्यामोहैकनिबन्धनम् ॥”

Panchadashi ; 1:12-14.

9 “सत्ता चितिः सुखं चेति स्वभावा ब्रह्मणस्तयः ।” \*Panchadashi ; 15:20. and

असत्ता जाड्यदुःखे द्वे मायारूपे त्रये त्विदम् ।”  
Panchadashi ; 15:23.

superstition, fear, dullness of the mind, and the weakness of the will—all tending to check the development in knowledge and values even within the confines of Maya.

## VI

Many people, including even many philosophers, labour under the impression that no religion of Bhakti (love of Personal God) can be consistent with Advaitism except as an indirect means preparing the mind, by way of a kind of purification, for the religion of Jnana (knowledge of the identity of the self with Brahman), which is the direct means to liberation (Moksha).<sup>11</sup> According to Sankara's conception of Bhakti, and the practical deductions he draws from his metaphysics, this, no doubt, is true.<sup>12</sup> But I beg to mention that these deductions of Sankara do not exhaust all the possible deductions, for practical religion, from his metaphysics. The content of the Advaitic concept of Ananda, for the purpose of religion, comprehends all the highest values experienced *now and here*, which, tending to expand beyond the limits of Maya, bring us in communion with Brahman. Hence, this content of Ananda cannot be rigidly fixed, must vary from nation to nation, from age to age, and from individual to individual in the same age, according to varying religious needs *actually felt*—according to the values man seeks to con-

serve in his embodied existence—even when the basic metaphysics remains the same. *Ananda or satisfaction is only a general concept ; as a mere general concept it can never serve the purpose of religious needs, but can do so only when filled in content with concrete values actually felt.*

In the history of Advaitism we meet with a class of strict followers of Sankara's metaphysics, called the Bhagavatadvaita-vadins, of whom Sreedhara Swami and Madhusudana Saraswati are the leading and, according to my conviction, invulnerable champions. In addition to the four kinds of Bhakti, as conceived of by Sankara, Sreedhara and Madhusudana conceive of a fifth kind of Bhakti, which they regard as the supreme valuation of life, (*paramapurushartha*), equivalent to, as well as including, the Mukti of Sankara.<sup>13</sup> Madhusudana distinguishes this Bhakti from Sankara's fourth kind of Bhakti, which is only a synonym of Brahmanavidya (knowledge of Brahman), by means of four characteristic differences. The first difference is that Bhakti is a *differentiated* function of the mind in which the mind is moulded in the form of Bhagavan (God with attributes), after being melted by His love ; whereas, Brahmanavidya is an *undifferentiated* function of the mind, in which only the non-dual self is perceived and which is not preceded by any melting of the heart. The second difference is

<sup>11</sup> As an example, I may mention the profound philosophical scholar, the late Mahamahopadhyaya Chandrakanta Tarkalankara. Vide his Calcutta University Fellowship Lectures (in Bengali) ; 2nd Year ; 1st Lecture ; pp. 36-41.

<sup>12</sup> For Sankara's conception of four classes of Bhakti, see his Geeta-Bhashya ; 18:55.

<sup>13</sup> As an example, I quote here the following from Madhusudana's own commentary on his Bhakti-Rasayana, Verse 1, Chapter I :—

“पुरुषार्थचतुष्टयान्तर्गतत्वेन वा स्वातन्त्र्येण वाऽयं भक्तियोगः पुरुषार्थः परमानन्दरूपत्वादिति निर्विवादम् ।”

that the means to the attainment of Bhakti is the hearing of the Scriptures in which are strung together the glories of the attributes of Bhagavan; while the means to Brahnavidya are the great Vedantic sentences such as "Thou art That." The third difference is that the result of Bhakti is the plenitude of love of Bhagavan; whereas that of Brahnavidya is the destruction of ignorance which is the root of all disvalues. The fourth difference is that all people have competency for Bhakti; whereas those competent for Brahnavidya are the Paramahansa wandering Sannyasins who are well-disciplined in the four-fold means viz., (i) the discrimination of the real from the unreal, (ii) renunciation of all enjoyments whether of this earth or of the heavens, (iii) the six virtues of self-control, such as harmlessness, etc., and (iv) the desire to be free from the rounds of births and deaths. Although Bhakti and Brahnavidya have some elements common, such as a preparatory purification of the mind through a right discharge of duties to others, and the goal of attaining the same supreme end of life, yet they are different since they are not alike in all respects.<sup>14</sup>

14 द्रवीभावपूर्विका हि मनसो भगवदाकारता सविकल्पकवृत्तिरूपा भक्तिः, द्रवीभावानुपेताऽद्वितीयात्ममालगोचरा निर्वर्कल्पकमनसो वृत्तिर्ब्रह्मविद्या भगवद्गुणगरिमग्रन्यनरूपग्रन्यश्रवणं भक्तिसाधनम्, 'तत्त्वमस्या' दिवेदान्तमहावाक्यं ब्रह्मविद्यासाधनम्, भगवद्विषयकप्रेमप्रकर्षो भक्तिफलम्, सर्वानर्थ-मूलाज्ञाननिवृत्तिर्ब्रह्मविद्याफलम्, प्राणिमात्रस्य भक्तावधिकारः, ब्रह्मविद्यायान्तु साधनचतुष्टयसम्पन्नस्य पैरमहंसपरिव्राजकस्याधिकारः।  
.....सामग्र्यैक्ये हि कार्यिक्यं न तु कारण-मात्रैक्येऽतिप्रसङ्गात् ।"

Madhusudana's Bhakti-Rasayana covers the whole range of the Bhakti of the Chaitanya-school of Vaishnavism, and yet is founded strictly on the metaphysics and psychology of the Sankara school of Advaitism. The late Ramakrishna Paramahansa seems, to my mind, to have been a wonderful living embodiment of such a sublime synthesis of Bhakti and Advaitic Jnana as was conceived of, systematised, and even lived by Madhusudana.

## VII

When the aesthetic, or moral, or some other sentimental aspect is very vigorously and richly developed in a personality, its religious needs can never be fully satisfied except by a Personal God with corresponding attributes. Hence, we find such an imperative need of conserving beauty and love bursting forth from the mouth of Madhusudana in the form of the following effusion : "There are mystics who, by a specific practice in the concentration of attention, perceive the partless and actionless Light in their souls. Let them perceive this (attributeless) Light, if they will. Let our eyes, however, be charmed, for ever, by (the beauty of) that blue effulgence, which runs about (in playful activity) in the heart of the bank of the Yamuna."<sup>15</sup>

15 "ध्यानाभ्यासवशीकृतेन मनसा यन्निष्कलं निष्क्रियं

उयोतिश्चेतसि योगिनो यदि परं पश्यन्ति पश्यन्तु ते ।

अस्माकन्तु तदेव लौचनचमत्काराय भूयाच्चिरं

कालिन्दी पुलिनोदरे किमपि यन्नीलं महो धावति ॥"

The worship of a Personal God, even in the highest stage of religious development, is quite consistent with Advaitism, provided it is performed in the Advaitic spirit, i.e., it is associated with the consciousness of the identity of the worshipper with his or her God in their transcendental nature. It is in this spirit that all Advaitic teachers, however advanced, openly bow down their heads in worship before their human Gurus, as has been done by Gaudapada in his *Mandukyopanishad-Karika* (4:1), by Sankara in the first sentence of his *Bhashya* on *Kathopanishad*, by Vidyaranya in his *Panchadashi* (1:1), etc. For, in spite of the fact that the aesthetic sentiments or the sentiments involved in family or social relationships were not cultivated by these metaphysicians, they had profound

feelings of genuine gratitude, love and reverence for the Gurus who showed them the way of realising the supreme valuation of their lives. Being genuine religious souls, they could not keep their grateful, reverential and loving personal relationship with their Gurus divorced on the inferior plane of secularity, while raising the rest of their lives to the superior plane of religion. As an instance of the psychological possibility of such a spirit, even among the masses, we find in the Hindu worship of every God or Goddess, at least in Bengal (with the single exception of the sect of the *dualistic* Vaishnavas), a stage in which the worshipper reverentially places a flower on his or her own head and thus worships himself or herself as identical with the Deity.

(Concluded.)

## VIVEKANANDA AS I SAW HIM

By E. T. Sturdy

[The following is a letter sent by Mr. Sturdy on the occasion of the birthday celebration of Swami Vivekananda organised in London recently. Mr. Sturdy has all through his life taken keen interest in Indian thought. He was the host of Swami Vivekananda in England, and his reminiscences, based on impressions gathered by close contact, are of considerable interest now, when the celebrations of the Swami's birthday anniversary are held in different parts of India.]

**A**LTHOUGH I am not to be present at your gathering in remembrance of your great predecessor, Swami Vivekananda, I think those present may like to have a picture of him from one who was very closely associated with him.

It is now some forty years since Vivekananda left this country, but the impression that he left with me is as vivid now as on the day that I said farewell to him.

I think this is largely accounted for—for I am not strong in reminiscence—by a quality in him, which is described by a Sanskrit word *Ojas*: it signifies bodily strength, virility and also vitality and splendour.

In fact he had a magnetic personality, associated with great tranquillity. Whether he was walking in the street or standing in a room, there was always the same dignity.

He had a great sense of humour and as a natural correlative, much pathos and pity for affliction. He was a charming companion and entered with ease into any environment he found. And I found that all classes of educated and uneducated persons that he was brought in contact with looked up to and admired the innate nobility that was in the man. One felt at all times that he was, to use a modern expression, 'conscious of the presence of God.' In walking, travelling, and leisure times, there constantly came from him some hardly formulated invocation or expression of devotion.

As a teacher, he had a great capacity for perceiving the difficulty of an inquirer, and would elucidate it with great simplicity and point to its solu-

tion. At the same time he could enter into great intricacies of thought.

I remember well his discussion with Dr. Paul Deussen, the then head of Kiel University. He pointed out where Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann were wrong in founding their philosophy upon the blind will, the Unconscious, as contrasted with Universal Thought, which must precede all desiring or willing. Unfortunately that error continues to-day and vitiates a great deal of Western psychology by its using a wrong terminology.

I will close this by remarking that, although if we were enlightened we should see Deity in every manifestation, nevertheless it is a great boon when we can perceive it as patent in noble and holy men. One of such was Sri Swami Vivekananda.

## WHAT IS AN INCARNATION ?

*By Dhan Gopal Mukerji*

[The following posthumous article of the late Mr. Dhan Gopal Mukerji, the well-known Indian writer and speaker, deals with an important theological subject on which there is a lot of loose thinking even among intelligent and well-informed people. Whether one agrees or not with all the ideas expressed by Mr. Mukerji, one gets in this writing of his some well-defined standards for understanding a divine personage. The article forms the substance of a lecture he delivered at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York.]

**I**N every part of the world there is a belief, inherited from ancient times, that there is an Incarnation, or that there are Incarnations, of God. This idea is universal, but in India the phrase is : "There are Incarnations of God because there *will* be Incarnations of God."

When I was a child of ten or eleven, I was sent to a mission school to study the religion of the missionaries, and in time I was told that

they had an Incarnation as the central figure of their religion. I came home to my mother, who did not know how to read or write, and told her every day what we learned there. One day, if I remember correctly, my mother said : "They are right, but do not forget that whenever any need arises in humanity for an Incarnation, the Incarnation of God will be born amongst men in the human body." This is pretty nearly the



universal conception taught by the Indian mothers, most of whom do not know how to read or write, and given to their children before the children are fourteen years old. Now this teaching must have a scientific basis. This teaching must have satisfied the Hindu race for hundreds and hundreds of years since the days of the Bhagavad Gita, and we must find the reason, and especially the science, on which this teaching is based.

In India there is a science of determining what an Incarnation of God is and should be. You notice this in America : If a man invents a thing, he sends it to the patent office where people can determine whether the patent is genuine or stolen or a piece of fraud. Similarly, in India, if any one announces he is an Incarnation of God, we have a body of experts and scriptures which delineate completely to our satisfaction what an Incarnation of God should be. And please always bear in mind that religion is a science and the one thing which should not be left to individual opinions, because it is the most precious thing in the world and it should be hemmed in with grim determination, to keep it within the province of knowledge, to keep it within the province of scientific study, to keep it within universal acceptance by the most spiritual and, at the same time, most intellectual people. We read in Sri Ramakrishna's life how a body of experts, consisting of learned scholars, divines and holy men, carefully studied the life and experiences of Sri Ramakrishna and came to the conclusion that he was an Incarnation. I shall leave it there, and we shall now take a look at other creeds and other Incarnations of God.

This particular one some believe to be an Incarnation—millions do not—Mahomed. We have to leave it at that, because Mahomed, and Moses too, never claimed Incarnationhood. They claimed other things, that they were both Messengers from above, and as such they founded their religions. On the contrary, there are persons such as Christ, Buddha, Rama, Krishna, who have been considered Incarnations of God by their followers. As for Rama and Krishna—they are Indians and they have been known as Incarnations for thousands of years. Regarding Christ, the knowledge has existed for two thousand years, and this knowledge has not been submitted to an Indian criticism. First of all the Indians insist that there should be a great decadence of righteousness and great ascendancy of unrighteousness in the world ; in order to re-establish the ascendancy of virtue an Incarnation is born. That is the first requirement according to our method of science. The second requirement is this : an Incarnation may or may not be naturally born. An Incarnation may have two human parents or he may have one human parent. It is a fact in philosophy that effect follows cause but in religion effect changes cause. Take for instance this : Why is it that Christ was continuously unselfish. Human beings are not unselfish. Human beings before him were not unselfish, and human beings after him were not always unselfish. But why was he selfless from beginning to end. That is an extraordinary fact. Man is the result of self-desire, and self-desire goes back to ancestors, and ancestors to animals, and animals go back to the first stirring of matter in the uni-

verse. That selfishness, coming from animal into man, from primitive man to civilised man, becomes so powerful that to have a selfless man is almost a miracle. In fact it is a miracle. And if this man is selfless for every moment of his life, from cradle to the end, then surely he is the effect of another cause. He is Divine, and instantly the effect changes the cause ; there is no cause and effect in his case. Desire is dead in him. For instance, take any human being—any one of us—in every pore of skin is desire of male and female from thousands and thousands of years. And this desire for self is blown out like an atom in the case of a Christ. In Christ there is no self, therefore his Father is Divine. This is the second item of science by which an Incarnation may be determined—there is no cause for such a person. Even in as modern a phenomenon as Ramakrishna, this hypothesis or belief is adhered to by ourselves in order to grasp his desireless character.

Then we come to the third item which is equally important. How does such a great being act ? How do we determine that ? We know he is selfless from beginning to end, and in one who is selfless we know his actions are selfless. There would be one thing about him that would mark him different from the others, and that is he would always be free from the fourfold prison house of which man is a prisoner. What is the fourfold prison ? I exist. I am in a body. Each man is inside the prison of his body. It is a fantastic thing—we are told every seven years the cells of our body die and new cells take the place of the old ones. Really speaking every seven years we are a new

person, yet we say, I am sixty, or I am forty, and when we die there is nothing of this body we can take with us. There is nothing in the whole body that we can take with us to the next world, when we die. Yet we are such prisoners of the body that we say, This is my body, and act in this world in terms of body. You cannot remove yourself from the body long enough to be able to act in this world in any other way. Incarnations of God must also act through a body in this world. But we act as victims of the body. We are never free of body-consciousness for a single moment ; we depend upon it to know the temperature, to know animals, to read books, even to attain to salvation. The dearest thing about a man is his body. In the case of an Incarnation you will find that the body is not dear to him, he can throw it away any time as a man throws away worn out garments and puts on new ones. An Incarnation has freedom from body-consciousness. He can also free others at will. That is why he is called saviour.

The second prison in which we live is relationship. I am a son, I am a brother, I am a daughter, or sister, or wife, or husband. Because of these relationships we are in prison. This prison of relationships is the second prison. The Incarnations of God have only one relationship : they are sons of the Divine. They have no mortal relationships whatsoever. He, the Divine One, has disciples, but he is not responsible for them. He has made God responsible for them. He has remitted sins but he has handed these sins over through himself to God. He has neither giving in marriage nor taking in marriage.

The third prison we live in is equally important and comes from the second. It consists in the fact that we fear the criticism of our neighbours and we love their approbation. That is the prison of fame and obscurity. They are the two sides of the same medal. An Incarnation has no such thing because he has not come for human fame. Human beings cannot appraise his character. Further he has not come for human criticism. It is not possible for man to evaluate him.

And fourthly he is free from self-consciousness. He is free from the feeling of pride that he is God. He is God to his followers but not to those who do not recognise him. To himself it does not matter, because he is continually in being. He is. It is others who call him Buddha or Christ, and call him all these names. Sri Ramakrishna said again and again : It is for the devotee there is an Incarnation—not for anyone else. From the standpoint of Knowledge there is no Incarnation. When Rama was going through the forest, only twelve sages called him an Incarnation. Others said : We believe in one all-pervading Being, and we know you are a man. Rama smiled and went away. Twelve others, however, knew that the impersonal beginningless, Supreme Self can come in human form for those who are his devotees, who do not wish to know anything but love of God. But to the Incarnation himself, it does not matter whether people recognise him or not ; for he is free from conceit. If a man writes a book, he goes about thinking that his is the only book any one should read. If a man delivers a lecture, he thinks that his lecture is the only one worth hearing. If a man

gives a piano recital, he thinks his way is the only way to play well. The Incarnation, on the other hand, is free from such corruptions of pride. He is even without the conceit that he is free from such corruption of pride. God, he has not even that idea.

Almost all men live in their four-fold prison : we are prisoners day and night ; even in sleep there is no freedom from this prison of cause and effect, time and space. The Incarnation is free from it, and because he is free of it, by thinking of him, we too slowly come out of our prison. It is only by thinking of him we unlock each door, and break through these fourfold walls. According to the Indian conception, an Incarnation must enable millions to free themselves. Like a steam liner, they not only cross the perilous ocean themselves but carry many with them.

Passing on to the next stage, we come to very divergent phenomena. When we look to Christ, we find he manifested Divinity in certain ways ; he healed the sick and raised the dead. He could change people's hearts with a single glance. In other words, he performed miracles for three years continuously, and thereby people concluded Christ was God-like, if not God himself.

But doing of external miracles is forbidden in Buddhism. When Buddha heard of a miracle performed by one of his disciples, he said that he who enters men's hearts through such paths will make them unsound, because these paths are strange. Therefore Buddhists should enter men's hearts through enlightenment, through compassion and through loving deeds. Another point extraordinary about

Buddha is that he claimed no divinity and preached no ultimate entity that can be called personal or divine. There is no reference to a being called God, or to a creator, in his teaching, yet to Hindus and to some Northern Buddhists he is an Incarnation.

We come to the last point. Indians believe that an Incarnation cannot be eternal. Even he has an end to his span of centuries. This is very difficult to explain to Christians, because Christians believe they have inherited an eternal Incarnation. As Augustine expressed it, the eternal religion existed before, but now we shall call it Christianity. Mahomedans believe that Mahomed was the last prophet, and everyone coming after him would be false prophets. On the contrary the Hindu mind insists that the universe is infinite and there are infinite possibilities. At one time Arjuna was calling Krishna an Incarnation. Krishna took Arjuna to a tree and said, "What do you see?" "I see fruits. Clusters and clusters of fruits I see," Arjuna replied. "Look a little more closely," asked Krishna. Arjuna looked, and each fruit Arjuna saw was an Incarnation of God. Krishna said: "Incarnations are infinite."

The Hindu's position is this: God inspires an Incarnation to speak a particular idiom and mythology. These cannot be true for ever. An Incarnation appears in a society where there is terrible degeneration and cultural decadence. He makes himself understandable to it by speaking in its idiom only. Otherwise there is no use of his coming down. If he was not to assume human limitations, he could have stayed beyond society and willed the transformation of humanity. Because

an Incarnation is limited, he talks in terms of salvation, heaven or hell. These are idioms through which he is taking people into freedom and salvation.

Five hundred years earlier than Christ, Buddha gave an illuminating parable to explain the idea behind the theory of heaven and hell. Some one asked him why there should be stories of heaven and hell and rewards. And in reply Buddha said—If a house is on fire and the upper stories are ablaze but the main floor has not yet been touched by fire, and there are seven children playing on the main floor of the house, and the owner of the house returns from somewhere else and finds his house ablaze, he should not spread panic among the children by bursting in upon them. For if they see his excited face, they will think that they are going to be punished, and run all over the house away from him and probably get burned. But if he would stand outside the door and call: I have sweets for you, come out and receive the sweets, they rush out, and then he can show them the burning house and tell them he has saved them from being burned to death.

In the same way many teachers come and speak of heaven and reward, and this they do in order to take men out of a sinful consciousness and bring them slowly to liberation. They speak in different idioms of thought and symbolism, say as Christ and Buddha did, in order to make themselves understood by people brought up in different cultures, and also in order that they may come down to the very level of the people and raise them from there.

Last of all, how do we recognise an Incarnation? By observing that he

performs miracles which we cannot perform. But a miracle, in order to be called a miracle, must pass practical tests. The fact that we are poor, wretched, human beings, prisoners of the fourfold prison, proves we want miracles that will free us from bondage. Indians say such miracles are permissible. In the case of Christ, we find he did miracles in the external world. That was, however, to convince common people of his divinity. But he did not show miracles to those who had eyes to see and ears to hear, and now and then when their eyes became blinded and their ears became deaf, he spoke in the voice of miracles. The most intimate apostles needed no external miracles. They were not necessary. In India, for Buddha or Sri Ramakrishna, all the miracles were inside. For instance, Swami Vivekananda used to say, "I have seen the supreme miracle, the most convincing miracle. Sri Ramakrishna would take men's minds, turn them into soft clay, and re-shape them in divine moulds. All of those who were thus treated became spiritual men instantly." This happened in our time !

I will conclude with one story illustrative of this supreme type of miracles, namely, the transformation of man's character, tendencies and sense of value. Ramachandra Dutt was a lay disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. One day, when he went to see the Master, he took with him his servant boy. This servant came from another province. His name was Latu. He spoke another dialect and was probably one of a very low caste. He was a boy of thirteen or fourteen. He brought a basket of fruits on his head and laid it, at Ramachandra Dutt's instruction, before Sri Rama-

krishna. The latter touched the chest of this boy, and the boy began to weep — to weep minute after minute. It went into an hour pretty nearly. Then the Master said to Ramachandra Dutt : "You see, the fountain was blocked up by pebbles and mud. I think they are removed, and now the fountain of spirituality will flow." The next time Latu came, the Lord touched him again. A long spell of weeping came over him. After his third or fourth visit to Sri Ramakrishna, he told his employer : "I do not wish to serve you any longer, if you give me permission, I wish to go and become Sri Ramakrishna's servant and serve him with love. I want nothing from him." Ramachandra Dutt gave his permission and Latu went to serve Sri Ramakrishna.

He had a queer habit. Every morning the first face he would see was Sri Ramakrishna's face. One day Sri Ramakrishna was in the garden very early in the morning. That morning Latu awoke, and not seeing Sri Ramakrishna, he put his hands over his eyes and shouted : "Where are you, O Lord, where are you ? If I see the face of anyone else before yours, my day will not be good." Sri Ramakrishna was in the garden but he heard him, and he called out "Wait, be quiet, I am coming."

I must tell you this about Latu. He was an extraordinary person. Latu took training under Sri Ramakrishna and within a few months' time he would be so God-intoxicated and would forget this world. One day Latu went to the garden to bring some leaves from a tree, and while doing this, he completely lost himself in God consciousness, and Sri Ramakrishna had to find him out and bring

him back. In this way Latu who came to take care of Sri Ramakrishna had to be taken care of many times by Sri Ramakrishna.

After the death of Sri Ramakrishna, Latu used to go begging for one meal a day. One day he was at a house where he was known, and he was asked to eat with the guests. But he was put way down before the guests. He sat down to eat. Suddenly on him came this idea : I who am an ascetic, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna—is it not strange for me to be seated this way ? Instantly he said to himself : But that is not right. If I had to beg to-day all over the town, it would take three hours, and here without any delay I am given delicious food, and I am eating comfortably. I am eternal, nothing can put taint on consciousness. Instantly the host came to him and asked whether he could serve him with anything. When he left, he stood at the door and pronounced blessings on the entire house by saying that that house was devoted to goodness, to holiness, to purity and to joy, and he prayed for that house. Later he said : “ You see, you have to watch yourself every minute.”

He used to fall asleep at night. Sri Ramakrishna said to him once, “ Sleep is darkness. Why do you sleep so much.” From that day he did not sleep even one night of his life, but meditated all night. I have heard it from those who cremated him that even in death, there was a light and glory visible in his face. When he was declared dead by the doctors, his eyes were wide open and his lips were radi-

ant. A holy man who was present there said, “ It is indeed to manifest the glory of unbegotten divine consciousness that in death, deathless departure was performed by Latu.”

Latu's case is an example of how Sri Ramakrishna could take men's minds like lumps of clay and reshape them and put them back into human beings. In the lives of Christ and Buddha also we read how men were changed instantly by their contact. In the long run Incarnations of God must do miracles, but the miracles by which they will be remembered longest are internal miracles. And the time has come to judge things by internal miracles because external miracles can be done by science to-day. And what is more, innumerable people, not at all spiritual, can also do these so-called external miracles. If we examine our standards of divinity and keep them sharp, like scientific tools, we will not be deceived by those pretenders. To make mortals immortal is within the province of only genuine masters.


Lastly, when an Incarnation pronounces a judgment about the life of any human being, there is no doubt that it will come to pass. In the case of a personage like Sri Ramakrishna, it is axiomatic that he never spoke idle words. Whatever he said was tested out by those who heard it, and invariably he was right. He said again and again, “ Truthfulness is the asceticism of this age,” and “ The mind and mouth should act as one.”

Now we have marshalled all the criteria by which we should appraise an Incarnation of God.

# THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

By G. Dharma Rao, M.A.

[Mr. Dharma Rao is the lecturer in English at the Khallikote College. He traces evil to weakness of will and self-centredness. Evil is only a negative value, and from a higher point of view it is recognised as a misreading of the moral situation. Evil is there only to grow into good.]

 ONE of the great difficulties that have always perplexed philosophers and theologians is the fact of evil. Till recently scientists were of opinion that the ultimate reality is mechanical in nature consisting of a fortuitous jumble of atoms and acting under blind forces. But to-day the mechanical interpretation of the universe is given up. The universe is considered to be more like a great thought than a great machine. The dualism of mind and matter is resolved, and matter is regarded as the creation of mind. Signs of a controlling and purposive power are detected in the universe,—a power which has something in common with our own individual minds.

The difficulty of the problem of evil becomes more acute than ever when we recognise that there is a purposive principle working in the world. There is no doubt pain and suffering in the sub-human level, for the bigger animals in the forest kill the smaller for their food. Yet, as naturalists tell us, even the smaller animals enjoy themselves, and their pleasure is more than their pain and suffering. The reason is not far to seek. The animal has conscious but it always lives in the present. To it a danger which is out of sight is out of mind. It has no consciousness of the past and present, no memory. It cannot detach itself from its environment. But man has conscious-

ness of the past and present. He has free ideas and the faculty known as imagination. He has consciousness of a purpose. His desires and appetites have an end and aim, some of which he characterises as good and others bad. In other words, he develops a sense of values—Truth, Beauty and Goodness. Truth, Beauty and Goodness are values because in them the human mind discovers something akin to itself. Only in other minds can a mind find its counterpart, and the essence of value lies in the mind's discovery of itself in its object.

Now, corresponding to these three positive values—Truth, Beauty and Goodness—we have the negative values, *viz.*, Error or Ignorance, Ugliness, and Moral Evil. We are concerned here with moral evil. In as much as men from their very birth live as members of a society acting and reacting upon one another, they have a consciousness of mutual obligation, which arises out of their personal relationships. Though codes of conduct vary from age to age and country to country, the sense of duty or obligation persists as the dynamic element in moral life and points to the discipline of the soul as the only moral good wherein all conflicts can be harmonised. The absence of a proper sense of obligation or its perversion in such a manner that what might be conducive to good may

become a source of evil, may be described as moral evil.

Now evil is a negative value and can be subordinated to good. The history of science is a progressive subordination of error to truth. In art even apparently ugly details are blended together to produce an impression of beauty. In moral and spiritual life, however, the triumph of good over evil is supreme. Moral good can neither enhance evil nor become evil. The crucifixion of Christ, taken as an event isolated from the circumstances of its occurrence, may be conceived as an evil, but viewed as a part of the world of which it is the centre, it cannot but be admitted to be good.

According to the view that the world is created and governed by God, the subordination of evil to good is a source of spiritual satisfaction. But on the level of human experience, two questions concerning evil press themselves for solution, namely,—what is its cause? and how can it be justified?

Evil is of three kinds, Error, Suffering and Sin. Now, how are they caused? To find an answer to this question, we must draw upon the evidence of biology. One outstanding point of difference between animals and men is that the latter have what the former have not—a capacity for 'free ideas', which, combined with imagination, so affects the life of desire that it may, if properly regulated, lead to 'sublimation' of the lower by the higher, and to mere lust, if unchecked and allowed to run loose. Therefore imagination has to be brought under the subjection of will.

The question then arises as to why the will is weak, and why men yield to

their low desires and selfish tendencies. This is because at the moment they appear good to them on account of their appeal to their egoism. What is apparently good blinds their perception of the real good which lies in their realising their oneness with others in the bond of love. It is the condition of man's mind or his character that determines what to him appears good. A thief steals because he has not before him, when he steals, the sense that he is breaking his obligations to his fellow man. The sorrow of the person robbed does not deter him from depriving the person robbed of what belonged to him. In the same way, a man who sacrifices his honour to personal ambition is attracted by the prospects of personal aggrandisement. In order to effect a change in the character of such men, their imagination should be made to dwell on the reality of a pure and upright life, and they must be trained to perceive that the goodness of an act does not depend on unrestricted freedom but upon a realisation that such a freedom is in conformity with their obligations to others.

To the selfish man everything has value only in so far as it ministers to the gratification of his exclusive self. He wrongly estimates the ends of life. It is not his desire and passions alone, but reason itself, that is corrupted. The root cause of moral evil may be therefore supposed to lie in the self.

But this assumption leads to an apparent contradiction. If the highest good is to be found in personal relationships, how can the persons who are involved in that relationship be evil? It is not the fault of man that he is created by



God with a self or a personality of his own. He is finite : his range of perception is limited. The fact is that man's sin is not due to his being a person but to his self-centredness. Each man is his own centre of value. His life, property, interests and rights are more relevant to him than those of others. He does not love his neighbour as himself. The principle of evil thus spreads from individual to individual and from generation to generation like a vast network from which even those that are virtuous cannot escape. Fear also contributes to the spread of evil. The League of Nations, for example, is founded on a fear of war but not a deep-rooted mutual love among nations. Even in Soviet Russia, which boasts of a society that has eliminated greed and competition, there is selfishness ; for its people believe in force, and force is always grounded in selfishness, not in love. If one member in a social organism is wicked, his neighbours, who are afraid of him also become so in self-defence. The moral progress of human society is thus retarded. Science, whose aim is the investigation of truth that should bind all humanity in one fold, is dethroned from its pedestal and prostituted to the promotion of national and racial rivalries. The State, whose purpose is to establish order by preventing the use of force, vitiates its purpose by resorting to violent suppression of individual liberty.

But this is only one side of the picture. To say that human nature is essentially depraved is to admit, as Christians do, the doctrine of original sin, which has its roots in the self-centredness of men, individually and collectively. The Hindu sages have declared we are not begotten of sin,

but are the children of immortality. Warped as our life of desire is on account of motives springing from selfishness, the sages of India have recognised that there is a principle in man that can break the shackles of self-centredness ; that the very self, round which those that have not had the vision of the Whole revolve as round a centre, is the very means of realising the oneness of love in human relationships. They intuitively saw that man is not perfect, but eternally perfectible, that evil is there only to grow into good, that imperfections are no more an obstacle to the realisation of the highest good than banks are to a river, and that the negative value exists only to be subsumed under the positive. Looked from the point of view of a small stretch of time, there may be pain and trouble ; but viewed from the perspective of the Infinite, they become joy and happiness. Martyrs in every age and country have testified to the glory of self-sacrifice. When a man awakes to the truth of love, he no longer yields to his desires. Buddha solved the problem of misery when he said that the sense of a separate personality is destroyed only through a life of Ahimsa and love. For a man's individuality is not the highest truth. The highest truth is God, in whom we "live and move and have our being." Utter self-surrender to Him ; and a worshipful attitude to life indicated by the saying "They will be done"—this is the alchemy by which good can be extracted out of evil. The good alone is the real and not the evil. Evil is essentially a conquerable thing, for it runs counter to the purpose of life. The only way to conquer evil is to confront it. It is like

a false scaffolding. That which appears evil holds the solution of the problem within itself. The Chinese sage exclaimed, "I meet good with good that good may be maintained. I meet evil with good that good may be created." Prayer is the magic with which good may be created out of evil, for

There is a soul of goodness in  
things evil,  
Would men observingly distil it  
out.

This distilling can be done by the sense of union with something not ourselves, something worthy of the hardships that we have to endure to acquire it. The ancient Rishis of India saw the evil in the mundane sphere; but being optimists, they could also transmute it into goodness which is reality. Hence their prayer to God

From the unreal lead me to the  
real,  
From darkness to light,  
From death unto immortality.

## CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE LIFE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

*By K. D. Guha, M.Sc., (Liverpool)*

[Mr. Guha is the Technical Advisor on Industries to the Government of Ceylon. The following is the substance of an address he delivered at Colombo in connection with the celebration of Swami Vivekananda's birthday anniversary.]

**I** BELONG to a generation in Bengal that had the great opportunity of being brought up in an atmosphere supremely charged with the unbodied influence of Swami Vivekananda. It was indeed the era of Vivekananda, whose mighty mind was working through all the living elements and institutions of the land.

An intimate study of the economic, social and spiritual conditions of India, when Swamiji was born, is essential for a correct comprehension of his great contribution towards the building up of the India of to-day.

The condition of India when Swamiji was born was economically bankrupt, socially stagnant, and spiritually confused by repeated famine, absurd orthodoxy and the bewildering glare of Western materialism.

The main tendencies among the educated people of India in these

days were cheap imitation of everything that came from the West, and an insuperable aversion for everything that was Indian, with the result that the gulf between the so-called educated class and the masses was wide. Even the most advanced social and religious reformers of the time did not even pretend to touch the fringe of the main problems of India that concerned the teeming millions, and rigidly limited themselves and their activities to small sophisticated groups.

The early life of Swamiji was very much influenced by some of those groups and the master minds of the West who dominated the thoughts of nineteenth century. As an undergraduate of the Calcutta University with liking for Philosophy, he was drifting along the casual current of agnosticism when he came in contact with Sri Ramakrishna, the pro-

pounder of universal faith, who utterly transformed the life of the unbelieving youth, Narendra Nath Dutt, and made a supreme gift of him to India, nay to the world, which knows him as Swami Vivekananda.

His life was short but nevertheless it was marked by the most amazing perfection of all the highest and diverse attributes that human nature is capable of. He was a poet, a musician, an orator, an athlete, a patriot, a dreamer, an organiser, and a prophet-warrior of the highest order, who declared an eternal war against the miseries of oppressed humanity. He had the most mysterious combination of the head of a Sankaracharya, the heart of a Buddha or a Christ, and generalship and personality of a Napoleon. His wonderful life was indeed "like the mighty dome of many coloured glass which stains the white radiance of eternity."

His life history has been recorded by many faithful and able hands. When we look back upon the perspective of his life, the scenes of struggle from his early unbelieving days ; the scenes of ecstatic peace from the divine communion with his Master ; the scenes of austerity and penance from his Baranagar days among his brother disciples after the passing away of the Master ; the scenes of his Parivrajaka days among the down-trodden and untouchables of India, whose abject miseries kindled in his great heart the flaming compassion that consumed him to the very last and gave a distinct orientation to his thoughts and activities ; the scenes from his spiritual mission to the West ; the scenes of triumph and victory from the Parliament of Religions at Chicago ; the scenes from

his campaign in America and Europe, the scenes from his triumphant return, which is within the memory of many living to-day ; the scenes from his great campaign in India, which resulted in the establishment of the Ramakrishna Mission ; the scenes from the patriotic reaction of his virile and independent mind ; the scenes from the 'wanderings' with Sister Nivedita and others in India and abroad, the scenes from the spiritual heights he attained and the final laying down of the arms of the prophet-warrior before he was forty ; —these overwhelm us through and through. Indeed, his short life was like the passing of a mighty star whose trail has been and will be the beacon light of many generations yet unborn. During his wanderings as an unknown Sannyasin in India he came face to face with the untold miseries of his people. He was supremely pained at the social injustice which had reduced millions of his countrymen to an appalling state of degradation, physically, economically, morally and spiritually. The sorrows of his fellow-men impelled him to come out of his religious seclusion and take the cause of Daridra Narayan (God in the poor), whom he taught us to worship all his life. The Napoleon in him declared to a brother disciple of his in course of his wanderings near Benares, "I am going away ; but I shall never come back until I can burst on society like a bomb and make it follow me like a dog." Well, he did burst like a bomb, and how the age-long accumulation of social abuses quivered at the assault ! The title of his first speech at Madras on his return to India was "My plan of campaign". Like a Napoleon he sounded his clarion call

for the general mobilisation for an organised attack on the monsters of social abuses, ignorance, poverty and despondency. He thundered: "Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of Gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving to-day and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the

land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it made you almost mad?" He continued: "What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist." His call still echoes and re-echoes from Ramakrishna Mission all over the world, demanding renunciation and service for humanity.

## NALANDA—ITS FAMOUS PANDITS

*By Swami Iswarananda*

[Swami Iswarananda of the Ramakrishna Mission gives an account of some of the great scholars who won an international reputation for the old Buddhist University of Nalanda. Nalanda was perhaps the first university in the world to gain an international reputation. This article, together with another written by the Swami in October, 1935 on the history of the University and the course of studies followed there, would give one some interesting details about this great temple of learning, of which India is justly proud.]

### ASANGA AND VASUBANDHU

THE first two great names that were connected with the Nalanda University were those of Nagarjuna and Arya Deva. But though their works were studied at Nalanda, they flourished before the rise of the University. Asanga and Vasubandhu seem to have been more directly connected with the university, for though they had finished most of their works away at Peshawar and Ayodhya, Asanga especially is said by Taranath to have spent the last twelve years of his life at Nalanda, probably just after the recognition of the University by Sakraditya, who founded the first *Sangharama*. They made valuable contributions towards the development of Buddhist philosophy and theology. Vasubandhu has left behind him four original works besides commentaries on four important Buddhist scriptures.

Vasubandhu's Tarka-Sastra is said to be the first regular work on Buddhist logic. While the other works of his have been lost, a few references to them remain in Chinese books. His formulation of syllogism is said to be similar in many respects to that of Aristotle. The doctrine of *Alayavijnana*, popularly known as *Yogachara*, and first propounded by Maitreya-natha, found its complete evolution at the hands of Asanga who is considered by many as the author and promulgator of that doctrine, according to which objects have no existence except in our mind as ideas. It is believed that methods of abstract meditation and other mystical practices of Yoga cult were grafted upon Mahayana Buddhism by Asanga. His principal works are *Saptadasa-bhumisastra*, *Mahayanasutropadesa*, and *Mahayanasamgrahasastra*. Tibetan opinion is definite that Tan-

trism came to be transmitted in the most secret manner from the time of Asanga onwards. It is quite probable that Asanga and Vasubandhu were the first great scholars who made the University of Nalanda famous immediately after its foundation.

#### DINNAGA

While at the sister University of Vikramasila the title of 'Pandita' was conferred upon every successful graduate, at Nalanda this title seems to have been limited to the head of the University. The Panditas of Nalanda therefore held a position not dissimilar to that of the Vice-Chancellors of modern Universities. The first great personage, who is definitely known to have graced the Pandita chair of the University, is Dinnaga who came from Kanchi, a centre of Buddhist learning in South India, and flourished in the earlier part of the 6th century. Dinnaga was first invited to Nalanda to take part in a debate with the Brahmin Sudurjaya, at whose hands the professors of Nalanda were being worsted. Dinnaga easily defeated the contravertalist thrice, and restored the fame of the University. He was a vigorous preacher of the *Abhidhamma*, and composed in all 100 Sastras.

Till about 400 A.D., logic was only a part of, and subsidiary to, the pursuit of philosophy and religion. Logic, as a subject of separate study, came into prominence with the advent of Dinnaga. He was the first systematic writer on Buddhist logic, and scholars consider him as the 'Father of Medieval Logic'. Three of his important works that have come down to us are *Nyayadwara*, *Nyaya Pravesa* and *Pramanasamu-*

*chaya*, though I-Tsing has referred by name to eight works of his. His works have still a firm hold on the scholars in China and Japan, even after the introduction of European logic. H. D. Sankalia credits him with having made four technical contributions to the subject, of which the principal one is the rejection of the five-membered syllogism.

#### JAYADEVA AND CHANDRAKIRITI

Dinnaga was succeeded by Jayadeva and Chandrakiriti. The latter wrote commentaries on important Madhyamika texts, and is described by Taranath as a Master of Masters. Another Pandit was Sthiramati, "the streams of whose superior knowledge," as Hiuen Tsiang puts it, "even now spread abroad." He contributed largely to the spread of Buddhism in Tibet, knew Tibetan well, and translated many Sanskrit works into that language, besides writing some works on *Tantra* and *Yogachara*. In Tibet he is known well as a great interpreter. Sthiramati is also the founder of a *Vihara* at Vallabhi, and seems to have flourished between 466 and 550 A.D.

#### DHARMAPALA

Kanchipura in the south again had the honour of seeing another of its citizens raised to the Pandita chair at Nalanda in the early years of the 7th century. H. D. Sankalia writes of him thus : "Dharmapala, though a son of a high official of the city, embraced the life of a Buddhist Bhikshu, at a very early age, and became one of the greatest luminaries of Nalanda. His help to Buddhism is of incalculable value. For even when he was in his teens, he accepted the challenge of a heretical Pandit, thrown to an assembly of Buddhist Pandits who

were dumbfounded and tore his arguments to pieces. By doing so he converted to Buddhism not only the Pandit but even the king who was partial to the heretic." Thus, according to Hiuen Tsiang 'he acquired renown for penetration and wisdom and the reputation of his noble character was spread abroad.' On another occasion he held discussions for seven long days with hundred scholars of the Hinayana school of Buddhism and utterly defeated them. He was a contemporary of Bhartrihari, and wrote the *sloka* portion of the *Bhedavriti* in collaboration with him. He wrote treatises on Etymology, Logic and the Metaphysics of Buddhism. I-Tsing mentions him as having made original contribution to logic.

#### SILABHADRA

Silabhadra, his disciple, who succeeded Dharmapala to the Pandita Chair of Nalanda was not a less renowned figure. Son of a King of Samatata in East India, and a Brahmin by caste, he renounced honours and comfort as well as his caste, and proceeded to Nalanda where he joined as a Bhiksu. He came to limelight by defeating a heretical Pandit of South India, an opponent of Dharmapala, in a great debate, and when he was rewarded by the king (probably of Magadha) with presents and revenues of a village, he is said to have declined it with the words: "A master who wears the garments of religion knows how to be contented with little, and to keep himself pure. What would he do with a town?" But ultimately he was prevailed upon to accept the gift, with which he founded a monastery on the route from Patna to Gaya. It was during

his regime that Hiuen Tsiang joined Nalanda as a student. Hiuen Tsiang was later on appointed as a professor, and sent out along with three others, at the request of King Harsha, as a missionary to refute heretical sects in Orissa and to convert the King Kumararaja of Kamarupa and his family to Buddhism, at the instance of Silabhadra. That Nalanda and its Pandits were held in great esteem at the time is evidenced from the following letter of King Harsha to Silabhadra. "Now I know that in your convent there are eminent priests and exceedingly gifted, of different schools of learning, who will undoubtedly be able to overthrow them—so now in answer to their challenge, I beg you to send four men of eminent ability, well-acquainted with one and the other school, and also with esoteric and exoteric doctrine, to the country of Orissa." Silabhadra divided the prevalent doctrines of the times into three categories, and with the help of these, refuted the Hinayana and extolled Mahayana. Though only one book has been assigned to him in the Tibetan catalogue, we learn from Huin Li that he could explain the contents of all the books in the Nalanda library, numbering some thousands. His profound knowledge, his virtue and his advanced age earned for him the title of '*paterfamilias*' of the Buddhist community. He flourished in the latter part of the 6th and the first half of the 7th century.

#### DHARMAKIRTI

Dharmakirti who succeeded him as Pandita wrote works on logic, and is said to have made his contribution to the subject by the formulation of the Traipura theory. Though Taranath has credited him with having defeated

Kumarila and Sankara in debates, later researches have disproved the veracity of this claim.

#### SANTARAKSHITA

Santarakshita and his disciple Kamalasila were famous as logicians in the 8th century. In the *Tatvasangraha* and its commentary they have surveyed all the philosophical systems of the time, and by refuting them, have strengthened the foundations of *Vijnanavada*. Santarakshita wrote six other works, and formulated the doctrine of *Mahasukhavada*, a development of the *Vijnanavada*, in his *Tatvasiddhi*, a Tantric work which reveals him as a follower of *Vajrayana*. He was known by the epithet *Asesaparasiddhantasagarapara*, one who has crossed the ocean of all the manifold doctrines formulated by others. He was a master of style and of the methods of refutation. He had the distinction of being the first Pandit officially invited to Tibet by the then king, Khri-son-dentsan. His first visit was not a success, and he was sent to Nepal. The king recalled him a second time. This time he sent for Padmasambhava to work with him and he, it is said, quieted all the gods and demons who were displeased with the presence of Santarakshita. They erected a model monastery at Odantapuri. Santarakshita was its first abbot. For thirteen years he propagated Buddhism in Tibet where he finally passed away in 762 A.D. Padmasambhava was a prominent expounder of the Yogachara school, and the founder of Lamaism in Tibet, where he is celebrated and deified as Buddha himself. It was again Kamalasila, a Pandita of Nalanda, who firmly established the Lamaic cult in Tibet. He was first brought

to Tibet by the king, at the instance of Santarakshita, to engage in a debate with one Hoshang who gave a very peculiar interpretation of the Buddhist scriptures. He seems to have flourished from 720 to 780 A.D.

#### OTHER PANDITS

Chandragomin, another of the great Pandits of Nalanda, wrote no less than sixty books in Sanskrit, and contributed greatly to the development of the Tantric cult. He was a versatile writer, and distinguished himself in literature, grammar, logic, astronomy, music, fine arts and medicine. He was the first man from the Bengal school of logicians to attract the attention of the literary world.

Viradeva who was appointed Pandita at the instance of king Devapala according to an inscription "had studied all the Vedas and reflected on the *sastras*." It describes him as 'This quintessence of intelligence.' He was 'praised by good people as a good man.' Nalanda had many Viharas and the University was in a very flourishing condition at the time of Viradeva. The last Pandita we know of is Buddhakirti. He was the last scholar the University produced before its destruction by Moslems.

#### AN INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

"The Pandits of Nalanda," says H. D. Sankalia, "were famous all over India for their knowledge. Countless Pandits of different faiths had to go away out of shame or disgust, or renounce their faith and become converts to Buddhism on being defeated in discussion." Nalanda was represented by no less than 1,000 scholars at the grand assembly convened by King Harsha at Kanyakubja to investigate the treatise of Hiuen Tsiang.

The fame of Nalanda had spread far and wide all over Asia and attracted students and pilgrims not only from distant cities of India such as Kanchipura in the south, Peshawar in the west and Samatata in the east, but also from distant China, Tibet, Korea, Japan, Java, Sumatra, Mongolia, Turkestan and Ceylon. Within the forty years following the visit of Hiuen Tsiang and I-Tsing, records mention not less than 57 students from foreign countries who studied at Nalanda, in an age when travel was so slow, difficult and unsafe. These students, when they returned to their countries, carried large numbers of manuscripts and became teachers and missionaries in their turn. Besides being the premier and pioneer university in India, with great international prestige, Nalanda had a prominent share in lighting the lamp of Buddha's wisdom in many a foreign land.

#### THE FALL OF NALANDA

The end of the University came rather suddenly in or about 1205 A.D. The sister universities of Odantapuri and Vikramasila also fell before the advancing tide of Moslem conquest. The chronicler describes the event thus :

"Bakhtiyar Khilji went to the gate of the fort of the Vihara with only two hundred horses and began the war by taking the enemy un-

awares. Muhamad Bakhtiyar, with great vigour and audacity, rushed in at the gate of the fort, and gained possession of the place. Great plunder fell into the hands of the victors. Most of the inhabitants were Brahmins with shaven heads. They were put to death. Large numbers of books were found there, and when the Muhammadans saw them, they called for some persons to explain their contents, but all the men had been killed. It was discovered that the whole fort and city was a place of study. In the Hindu language the word Vihara means a college."

A feeble but unsuccessful attempt seems to have been made to regenerate the University. Buddhism had decayed by this time. Tantrism had already eaten into the vitals of the pure and noble teachings of the Buddha, and royal patronage had fallen off. The distinguishing features of its popular cult were absorbed into the Vedic and Pauranic Hinduism, while on the philosophical side Buddhism met heavy defeats at the hands of Vedantic dialecticians. The Muslim conquest absorbed the energy of the people. Buddhism could no more command among its followers the enthusiasm and earnest devotion required for a sustained effort for a great cause. Nalanda vanished once for all to live only in the pages of history.

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## NEWS AND VIEWS

### A Plea for Reform in Music

In his presidential address before the recent musical conference organised by the Music Academy of Madras, Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Iyar struck a new note when he said :

"It is necessary that the singer should himself understand the full meaning of the words of the song and himself experience the emotions. An understanding of the words of Kirtanas is essential if the singer is to convey their full meaning to the audience. A knowledge of the language of the musical compositions, or at least the meaning of the particular songs is a great desideratum for all musicians."

He specially brought to notice the necessity of bringing out the full emotional effect of the song (bhavanvitatva). Complaining about the absence of sublimity in our music he said :

"Another point which has struck me in our music is the absence of solemnity and sublimity in our vocal and instrumental music. I doubt whether the emotion of the sublime is at all included in our list of Bhavas. Vismaya or wonder may be an element of the sublime, but there are many elements included in our notion of the sublime, such as the sense of vastness, immense power or energy, the sense of awe and often of reverence. I have not heard anything in Indian music which produces the same emotion of solemnity and sublimity as the organ in Christian churches. Our languages lend themselves to compositions which can inspire the feelings of devotion, reverence and awe. But I am not aware of any musical instruments which are capable of producing all these feelings in the same manner as the organ. It is a commonplace observation that melody is the characteristic of Indian music and harmony of western music. Our musical instruments are not capable of producing the mighty volume of harmony which is the glory of the organ.

"Even our vocal music is not conspicuous for the sublime and the solemn.

Pathos, tenderness, sorrow and various other emotions are capable of being rendered by our vocal music. The chanting of the Sama Veda is no doubt solemn, but as it is chanted to-day, it tends to be monotonous. The music in South Indian temples is generally played by the Nagaswaram, an instrument from which, in spite of its shrill notes, our musicians are capable of extracting a large variety of pleasing tunes but which can hardly be said to be adapted to the production of a sense of sublimity or solemnity. I have sometimes wondered at this difference between our temple music and the European church music. Can it be that to the European the deity is infinitely distant and above him, whereas the Indian is living on more intimate terms with the deity, finding God within himself and near him and everywhere? The truth, however, is that, as the Upanishads say, God is both far and near.

"Though the national development of Indian music has been on the line of melody and of western music in the direction of harmony, is it impossible to adapt our Indian musical instruments to the production of harmonies? We have endeavoured to adapt exotic things like the brass band and play Indian airs upon them. We have acquired a splendid mastery of the exotic violin of which we are justly proud. We are trying to introduce and work the exotic plant of responsible government. Is any attempt to produce harmonies in the style of western music foredoomed to failure?"

Further he recommends :

"In the Teachers' College of Music which the Academy is running, you must make a determined effort to suppress all facial contortions on the part of teachers and pupils alike. Facial contortions are not inevitable incidents of fine singing as can be seen from the avoidance of such disagreeable features by female singers. They were condemned by our ancient authorities also. The Sangita Ratnakara includes ugly and uncouth movements and gesticulations among the 25 faults (Doshas) on the part of the singer."

We feel that these are considerations that deserve the closest attention of lovers and promoters of music in India.

### Hindi versus English

The following points raised by Mr. C. G. A. Mac Alpine in a speech he delivered before the Mysore Educational League is worthy of consideration. He said :

"If every Englishman left India tomorrow, it would be still more necessary than it is now for every Indian whose education is to go beyond the primary stage, to learn English. This seems to me to be a matter in which there is a definite danger of narrow parochial patriotism confusing an issue that is far wider than most people realise. Unless India proposes to turn her back upon the world, and revert to her former village economy, it is impossible in any near future for her to do without one or other of the languages of the West. English, French and German are perhaps three most important, and, by historical accident and present world predominance, English happens to be the language obviously indicated.

"The linguistic question in India in recent years has been complicated by the emergence of an Indian contender for the position of the educated man's lingua franca. I refer of course to Hindi. One need not take the public utterances of fanatical politicians exactly at their face value, but it may be helpful for us as educationists to consider the question dispassionately from the purely linguistic point of view. The first point which it is desirable to make clear is that Hindi is no rival of English, for the obvious reason that it offers none of the advantages to be found in English. Unless and until Hindi can do the work that English does for the educated Indian, it is idle to talk of it as a competitor. If you grant this point of view, the problem becomes simpler. The population of every country is divided linguistically into two main divisions—(1) Those who never learn any language except their mother tongue, (2) the vastly smaller number of people who learn one or more second languages. Even in countries which are 100 per cent. literate, the vast bulk of the population

never learns any language except its own. Elementary education in such countries does not in general provide any instruction in a second language. In this respect a country like Great Britain is in no way different from India. It seems to me, therefore, difficult to conceive that the illiterate villager, or in the future, the villager who has received a primary school education, is going to learn Hindi, unless Hindi happens to be the language he learnt in infancy. There may no doubt be such people but they are in a negligible minority. The average person, if asked to undertake the study of Hindi in addition to English, will want to know what use it is going to be to him. I can quite see that from the point of view of a politician of a certain persuasion, it may be extremely desirable to learn Hindi. I can also see that there may be businessmen in Bengal or in the South of India who have occasion to go into the villages in the north of India and who would find that the colloquial knowledge of Hindi is useful to their business. I am, however, very definitely of the opinion that the total number of people outside the Hindi-speaking areas who can possibly find such use for Hindi is so negligible as to render the problem, at the present moment at least, more academic than practical. If the time ever comes when the bulk of the people of India, who do not now speak Hindi, find that it is economically profitable for them to learn that language, then they will do so, fast enough, and without any pressure from anybody. The vast bulk of the population in any country in the world never moves away far from their own linguistic area, and unless an overwhelmingly strong economic motive arises, such people will not take trouble to learn what they cannot conceivably find any use for."

There is much to be said in favour of Principal Mac Alpine's argument. He, however, forgets one important consideration. European languages have to be learnt at present in order to be in touch with the modern world tendencies and cultural forces, because European people are to-day dominant in the world. If however this position of dominance shifts to Asia—a contingency which Mr. Mac Alpine completely overlooks—the as-

sumption behind his arguments will not hold good. At present, however, that contingency has not arisen.

Again the introduction of Sanskrit in the elementary and secondary stages of the present educational system as a compulsory subject, with a curriculum wisely devised, would much more serve the cultural ideals which the introduction of Hindi is expected to popularise. For, of all the Indian languages Sanskrit alone could bring home to an Indian mind the sense of our national solidarity and the great cultural purpose of the race as a whole, and put down all subtle provincial and communal misunderstandings. It is absurd for anyone in India to think that Sanskrit culture is the monopoly of one class or province.

#### **Ayurvedic Method**

In the course of his welcome address in the recent Ayurvedic Conference, Dr. R. K. Valvekal, B.Sc., M.P.M.S., pregnantly remarked :

"Let any western medical man compare the Ayurvedic method of diagnosis with his own. Its 1. Hetu, 2. Pragroopa, 3. Roopa, 4. Upashaya, and 5. Samprapti ; and 1. Pradhanika Hetu, 2. Sannikrishta Hetu, 3. Viprakrishta Hetu, 4. Vyabichara Hetu, 5. Asatmyendriyarthasamyoga Hetu, and 6. Parinama Hetu ; and the various sub-divisions of the remaining four cannot but convince him of the thorough-going science of Ayurveda. With all due regard to Allopathy as a whole, a fair critic will have to say in this matter that it has yet to approach the heights Ayurveda is based upon. Allopathy is at its best mostly dealing with but one aspect, the Parinama Hetu, the lesional or pathological one. However fine and accurate the many means and instruments may be of examining this aspect—which by the way the Ayurvedists will do well to study,—for the purpose of

real basic diagnosis, these cannot be said to be enough."

#### **Depressed Classes and Christianity**

Dr. B. P. Hivala, presiding over the 12th session of the All-India Conference of Indian Christians, said that any attempts to enter into barter or bargain with the depressed classes for political purposes, or with the hope of increasing their numbers, was against the very spirit of their religion, and they must set their face against that. He concluded with the remark that the Christian Church must so alter its own mode of life that it could truly reflect in itself the community which Jesus Christ had in mind.

#### **Die to make others live**

General Evangeline Booth, leader of the Salvation Army in a recent speech said :

"The Salvation Army was not a business, not an undertaking, not a philanthropic idea, not even a Christ-like impulse only : it was life, a heart beat, a longing to die to make others live."

#### **Sir T. B. Saprú's Advice**

Sir T. B. Saprú in his recent convocation address to the graduates of the Punjab University asks :

"Does an average school-boy develop a healthy curiosity to know something more than what he finds in his books, does he develop power of observation, does he develop the hobbies, does he acquire in some degree a sense of self-reliance ?"

Continuing he warns the new graduates :

"If we are to develop a common life and achieve common ends, think less and talk less of communal rights and think more and more of common duties. Face the world with confidence, in a spirit of high resolve and noble purpose and with the faith that the best is yet to be."

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**Sakti or Divine Power :** *By Sudhendu Kumar Das, M.A., Ph.D. (London). Published by the University of Calcutta.*

The author of the dissertation investigates into the evolution of the idea of Cosmic Energy, as interpreted by Vedas, the Kashmere and the Vira Saiva Schools of thought, and finally by the Mimamsa and the other orthodox systems. He goes on to trace the origin of the words 'Sakti or Sachi, and Gna, and to consider how the feminine terms came to signify a collective idea of 'one Supreme Sakti as a divine female, a supremely conscious principle of female sex, a reflex identity in relation to the Divine male, an abstract character, the Creative Energy and an intelligent divine principle,' in so far as it could be seen in the dim light of the conflicting texts bearing on the subject.

As far as the Vedic literature is concerned, the notion of Vak, after passing through conflicting interpretations, developed into the enlarged conception of the supreme creative principle. The Upanishads however concern themselves mainly with the one all-embracing principle, Brahman, and it is in the theistic Upanishads alone that the Brahman of the other Upanishads becomes really the Personal God or Iswara, associated with Sakti who is not altogether a separate principle but belongs to him as His own.

It is noteworthy that the major portion of the book is devoted to the consideration of 'Sakti' in the Trika School of Kashmere. Her relation to Parama Siva, Her manifestations, Her Maya aspect, Mava and her evolutes, Matrika or Sakti inherent in Mantras, meaning of Mantra in Trika, are all elaborately treated. The idea of Sakti is interpreted by most of the writers of the school as the inner nature of the most 'Supreme Siva' (Parama Siva Bhattacharya), who possesses consciousness of Perfect Egoity and unrestricted freedom. One important factor that strikes a student of Trika literature is that almost all the definitions of Saiva writers explain the world of phenomena—both mental and material—not from a static point of view alone, but as a vast storehouse of one energy manifesting itself partly as potential and partly as active.

The Lingayata or Vira Saiva School has much in common with the Trika. But it develops a new path when it asserts the existence of a Suddha-Maya in opposition to the Samkhya Prakriti or the Advaidic Trigunatmika Maya.

Finally we come to the Sakti in Mimamsa and the other orthodox systems. They treat of Sakti 'as an impelling agency of force' in connection with the topic of Apurva, which acts as an intermediary principle between sacrificial rites and their results. This conception of Sakti stands almost all by itself.

The book has an extremely helpful appendix, with copious illustrations from the original texts. It is a scholarly production and well worth studying by those interested in the subject.

**The Cross and Indian Thought :** *By V. Chakkrarai, B.A., B.L. Published by the Christian Literary Society, Madras. Price Re. 1-4.*

The author has attempted to present the central problem of Christianity, and in doing so he examines the metaphysical and emotional approach to it and investigates whether the seemingly contradictory paths could be harmonised. He has endeavoured to re-enumerate the principles of Christianity in the lights of modern tendencies, and realises the need of making a good use of Indian religious thoughts and experience, the fruits of centuries, in the interpretation of Christianity. With this in view, Mr. Chakkrarai has examined and evaluated Hindu philosophical concept in terms of Christian thought. It is not possible to see eye to eye with this learned author in his evaluation, but it has to be admitted that his writing is thought-provoking and a valuable contribution to philosophical thought.

**Is there a God? :** *By Z. O. C. D. Printed at Industrial School Press, Ernakulam.*

This book is a compilation of the lectures delivered by the author in certain religious conferences held in Parur in Malabar with the object of spreading theistic belief in an age in which it is gradually vanishing.

**Present-day Problems of Indian Education :** *By Prof. M. Zuhuruddin Ahmed, Ismail College, Andheri, Bombay. Copies can be had of the author.. Price Re. 1-4-0.*

This is a crisp and eminently readable essay on Indian education. The author gives a broad outline of the changes that education in this land has undergone from the Vedic times upto the present day. Prof. Ahmed estimates the ancient Gurukul ideal as much better than any modern system in so far as it sets up an intimate personal contact between the teacher and the pupil, and gave the latter a preparation for actual life. Buddhistic times saw the emancipation of women and the masses and a remarkable development in popular education of both sexes through the network of monasteries that appeared all over the land.

The chapter on Mohammedan education is the most valuable and authoritative part of the book. We get here an account of the kind of help that Muslim rulers used to render to Hindu educational institutions, of the Moghul system of education through Mukhtabs and Madrasahs, and of the arrangements for girls' education. A section is devoted also to present-day educational problems.

The author holds strong views on religious education. The experiments in religious instruction, worked out in the Benares Hindu University and the Muslim University in Aligarh, have been failures because of the half-hearted manner and superficial way in which the authorities handled the question. He has got his own constructive suggestions on the problem.

The author reveals in the book a refreshingly frank and simple mind, which makes him at times express his ideas without any prevarication and adequate discussion. As examples of this we may mention his advocacy of Urdu as the common national language for India, and his plea for putting women behind the Purdah. His views on many points are original, though also on occasions crude and ill-thought out.

**Religion :** *By Julius Hecker. Published by John Lane, The Bodley Head, London. Price 3sh. 6d.*

This handy volume of the 20th Century Library Series affords a lucid survey

of the state of religion in the West under the impact of ever-changing civilisation. The contents of the work fall under six well-defined chapters, all together attractively forming an organic whole. The opening chapter briefly discloses what religion means to the believing Westerner to-day. To some it is a piece of faint bibliolatry or an attitude towards life coloured by the life of Jesus. Many seek religion to assure them safety in a supposed post-mortem state. There are still many others who look towards it as the source of artistic inspiration. Anyway the religious instinct is not dead in the West as many would think. The second chapter outlines the attempts of reflective minds to appraise the religious response with the aid of anthropology, epistemology, sociology, psychology, mysticism and communism. The central fact dealt with in the next chapter is the enthusiastic efforts made to effect inter-denominational co-operation, based on social and cultural interests. "Dogma divides—service unites," has become the slogan of Christendom. The fourth chapter is a brilliant summary of the sure process by which modern thought and culture have been secularised by successive discoveries made by human mind progressively emancipated from the fetters of tradition. How "vast masses of myth, legend, marvel and dogmatic assertion coming into the atmosphere have been and are now dissolving away like icebergs drifted into the gulf-stream," and how a "trader's civilisation" has built a moral culture upon the quicksands of prudential self-interest—have vividly caught the author's imagination. The next chapter bears the heading "What is aiding religion?" The residual faith of the modern generation finally seeks its support for religion on the pronouncement of Haldane, Eddington, Thompson, Whitehead and other celebrities of science and philosophy. Here in this chapter we get a conspectus of their concluding views. A chapter giving the author's forecast of future religion based on his own sufficiently long and direct experience in Russia, England and America concludes the volume. The book on the whole is a judicious and critical study of the subject. It provides excellent reading for the general reader, keeping away all tedious details from his way. The get-up of the book bears the mark of a first-rate firm's production.

(1) *Siddhantatraya Sangraham*. (2) *Abhayapradanasaram* (Tamil) : By *Mahamahopadhyaya Kapisthalam Desikacharyar* and *Nigamantamahadesika* respectively. To be had of *The Treasurer, The Visishtadvaita Sabha*. 41, Big Street, Kumbhakonam. Price 8 annas each. Pp. 142 & 200 respectively.

The first one, as the name indicates, is an outline of the three outstanding religious schools of South India in simple Tamil prose. The first 29 pages are devoted for Dvaita and Advaita, which evidently receive only a meagre treatment. In the rest of the book, running over the next 114 pages, the crude author, a renowned authority on Visishtadvaita, gives a valuable exposition of that system.

The second volume is of classical fame. In the school of Visishtadvaita, the name of Vedantadesika is one to conjure with. We have in his *Abhayapradana Saram* or "the Essence of the Granting of the Refuge" the

central doctrine of Sri Vaishnavism expounded most authoritatively in magnificent "manipravala" style. This excellent annotated edition of his work will surely be appreciated by all devout hearts thirsting for the waters of life.

*Sri Vasishtha-Darsana-Sara* (Hindi) : By *B. Atreya, M.A., D.Litt., Prof. of Philosophy, Hindu University*.

An extremely useful collection of 150 gem-like stanzas from the colossal philosophical work, *Vasishtha Ramayana*, arranged under proper headings, along with a Hindi rendering. The learned professor has also prefixed an informative Introduction.

*Sri Rama Gita* (Hindi) : With text in Sanskrit, and Hindi Introduction and translation by *Sri Chinmaya Chaitanya, Sri Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora*.

The ideas of the text are clearly and elaborately brought out in the author's translation and explanations.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Centenary News

The pilgrimage undertaken in pursuance of the general scheme of the Centenary Celebration came off in the last week of December. Pilgrims from Bombay, Assam, South India, C.P., U.P., Behar, and Orissa besides those coming from Bengal assembled at the birth places of Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother, two small villages in the Hugly Dt., known respectively as Kamarpukur and Jayarambati. These two villages had the proud and unprecedented privilege of witnessing a unique festival constituted of elaborate worship, chants, religious folk-songs, crowded meetings and extensive feeding of the poor people (Daridranarayanans). The gathering at Jayarambati was presided over by S. J. Varadaprassanna Ray, retired sub-judge, who had met the Master and the Mother during their life-time.

Of the recent events in connection with the Centenary, the celebrations in the prominent cities of Bangalore, Patna and Allahabad deserve mention specially. His Highness the Maharajah of Mysore, with a brief speech beginning with a reference to the first contact the royal family had with Swami Vivekananda, inaugurated the centenary celebrations in Bangalore. The func-

tion lasted for nine days during which time there were largely attended meetings, processions and other interesting items of the programme. Every day about 3,000 persons attended the functions and the Ladies' Day, in which about 3,000 ladies participated, was perhaps unparalleled in any celebration of its kind in the city. Some of the local papers brought out special editions giving details of the celebrations and life-sketches of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. At Patna too the celebration lasted for nine days, with the usual programme. The public meeting was presided over by the Vice-Chancellor of Patna University, Mr. Sacchidanand Sinha, and it was addressed by prominent gentlemen like Hon'ble Mr. Justice Khwaja Muhammad Noor and Hon'ble Mr. Justice S. B. Dhavle. Three important gatherings, of which the last one was of ladies, marked the Centenary Celebration at Allahabad. Mm. Pt. Ganganath Jha, M.A., D.Litt., Sir Lal Gopal Mukerjee and Lady Wazir Hasan respectively presided over these meetings and Pt. Iqbal Narain Gatri, Vice-Chancellor of the Allahabad University, Mrs. Uma Nehru and others of high standing addressed the meetings. The Centenary was also celebrated at Raipur, Bally and Chandernagore.

### Holy Mother's Birthday

The 84th Birthday Anniversary of Sri Saradamani Devi was publicly celebrated in the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras. A public meeting was held on 3rd ult., attended by a large number of ladies and presided over by Dr. Mrs. Muthulakshmi Reddi. Inspiring speeches were made on the occasion by the president, and by Sm. Subbulakshmi Ammal, Sm. Ratnamayi Ammal and other speakers, clearly bringing home to the audience the ideal of purity and self-abnegation so eminently held up before Indian womanhood in the life of the Holy Mother.

### Ramakrishna Competitive Examination

The following are the results of a competitive examination conducted by the Ramakrishna Samithi, Rajahmundry, in November 1936, on 1. The Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna and 2. Upadesa-saram of Sri Ramana Maharshi.

#### Section 1. (High School Students)

1st Prize : No. 160 Y. Parthasaradhi.

2nd Prize : No. 5 M. Bhuvarahaswami.

1st Class : Nos. 5, 53, 160, 165, 167.

2nd Class : Nos. 16, 34, 136, 147, 156, 159.

3rd Class : Nos. 54, 56, 81, 131, 135, 146, 161, 170, 171, 173, 182.

#### Section 2. (Middle & Etc. School Students)

1st Prize : No. 137 V. Durgaprasadarao.

2nd Prize : No. 29 B. L. Narasimhaiah.

1st Class : Nos. 29, 59, 61, 67, 70, 71, 72, 137, 180.

2nd Class : Nos. 58, 125, 178.

3rd Class : Nos. 22, 32, 43, 63, 64, 133, 176, 181.

#### Section 3. (Others)

1st Prize : No. 66 G. V. Subrahmanyam.

2nd Prize : No. 150 S. Lakshminarayana-murthy.

1st Class : Nos. 47, 62, 66, 100, 102, 103, 104, 129, 150, 154.

2nd Class : Nos. 49, 83, 106, 109, 175, 179.

3rd Class : No. 122, 123.

#### Special Prizes

For Harijans : No. 83 B. Haridas.

For Mahomedans : No. 63 Md. Rashid Ahamad.

For Christians : No. 64 Sesham Jacob.

For Girls : No. 180 S. Lakshmikant-amma.

**Note.**—Prizes for all the successful candidates and consideration prizes for failed candidates will be sent to the Superintendents of their respective centres. The next examination with the same text books will be held on 24—10—1937. Applications with an entrance fee of Annas four should reach the undersigned on or before 31—8—1937. For details apply with Nine Pies stamp to: B. Gauripathy Sastry, Secretary, Ramakrishna Samithi, Rajahmundry.

### Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras

The Thirty-second Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Mylapore, Madras is now before us. The total strength of the Home, including the students of the High School, Industrial School and those attending other colleges of the city, is 167. Of these 76 students are holders of scholarships and other concessions. The policy of admission is to select the poorest among the best. Tutorial guidance, physical training, games, garden work, library and reading room, moral and religious instruction, music classes, festivals and Old Boys' Association are the main headings in the report that would specially attract the notice of a reader as indicators of the man-making education aimed at by the institution. The extracts appended from the visitors' book reveal the highly commendable impression some of the distinguished visitors carried with them about the working of the institution, the avowed aim of which is to impart the idea of self-help to boys. We would very much like to bring to the notice of the public the concluding section of the report. "Non-recurring schemes apart," says the report "the running of the Home with its allied institutions costs Rs. 48,000 per annum. While about one half of this is met by interests on deposits and Government grants, the other half has to be found by means of subscriptions collected from day to-day. A very few generous friends and charitable organisations are contributing towards the maintaining of one or more scholars.... and the management hope that..... several others blessed with this world's goods will follow the noble example and not allow a really deserving institution to suffer from the financial support it needs."







Swami Akhandanandaji



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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[No. 11

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## MAHASAMADHI

At 3-7 P.M., on Sunday, the 7th February, 1937, Srimat Swami Akhandanandaji Maharaj, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, gave up his mortal coil and entered Immortal Peace. The suddenness of the event is paralleled only by the magnitude of the loss which we have sustained on the eve of a great event. A direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and a beloved fellow-disciple and close associate of Swami Vivekananda, the Swami was a great source of inspiration to the whole Ramakrishna Order and a large circle of devotees and admirers. From early life he devoted his life exclusively to the quest after Truth, and the spiritual fervour and earnestness of his soul found expression not only in meditation, penance and pilgrimages beyond the snowy heights of the Himalayas, but also in the service of Divinity enshrined in suffering humanity. Among the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna he was the first to start centres for the relief of human suffering, and thus to give practical expression to Swami Vivekananda's scheme of spiritual discipline through disinterested service of every kind. Ever since he started the Sri Ramakrishna Orphanage at Murshidabad in 1894, he stuck on to that centre of work till his last days, making the service of God in man an integral part of his daily life. May the example of his noble life and the blessings of his transfigured spirit give spiritual strength to us, his bereaved children, and enable us to live up to the great ideals of renunciation and service which he embodied in himself.

Om Santih ! Santih ! Santih !

# SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE GREAT MASTER

*By Swami Saradananda.*

[Swami Saradananda was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. "Sri Ramakrishna, the Great Master," is a close translation of the Swami's well-known Bengali work on the Master, which is one of the most authoritative and exhaustive sources of information on the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. In this section we get an account of the Master's relation with Swami Tota Puri who initiated him into the mysteries of Advaita Vedanta.]

## *The Mind of Tota Puri*

**A**S a result of his previously acquired religious merit, Tota Puri's mind too was straightforward and possessed of unwavering faith. The great teacher, Sankara, states in the very beginning of his *Vivekachudamani*: "Human birth, the desire for God-realisation and the protecting care of a perfected sage—these three things are rare indeed, and result from the grace of God." Not only was Tota Puri fortunate enough to be endowed with these three gifts, but he had also made proper use of the opportunities that thus came in his way, and attained liberation, which is the highest goal of human life. His mind would always grasp the teachings of his Guru correctly, and translate them into action. He never seems to have suffered much from the pranks of a deceptive mind. There is an adage common among the Vaishnavas — "Guru, Krishna (God) and Vaishnava (*i.e.*, God's devotees), these three may all have mercy on the Jiva (aspirant); nevertheless, he goes to ruin for want of the favour of one alone, *i.e.*, of his own mind." In the case of Tota Puri, however, there was no such fear arising from the wickedness of the mind. Possessed as he was of a straightforward nature, it was easy for him to have strong faith in God,

and to proceed with sure steps along the path shown by his Guru, never casting back a longing glance at the evil temptations of this world. Consequently, in Tota Puri's estimate personal effort, self-reliance and diligence were the sole factors that counted in the life of man. He had no occasion to know that, when the mind took a hostile turn, the individual depending solely on one's own effort would be swept off like a tuft of grass before a torrent, and his faith in self-effort and self-dependence would easily be displaced by total disbelief in one's own powers, thus rendering the soul weaker than a crawling worm. From a retrospect of his own past he could never even imagine that, when the external circumstances were not favourable through the grace of God, all the independent efforts of a person would only bring results contrary to his expectations, and help to make him all the more entangled in bondage. For how could he have any idea of the helplessness of man when he had himself come out successful in all his endeavours from his very birth, and achieved in his own life what he knew to be the supreme good of man? Therefore, it is doubtful whether Tota Puri could ever picture in his mind the pitiable condition of the man who is convinced of the greatness of an idea or ideal,

but finds it impossible to follow it in life ; who inspite of his efforts fails to make his thoughts and words tally with each other, and suffers continually on this account the pangs of conscience comparable to the stings of a hundred scorpions ; in whom the faculties of the mind, deprived of the guidance of a single purpose, are in a state of mutual warfare, impelling every passion to prop up its head in defiance of external checks, depriving the soul of all peace and subjecting it to the dreadful torments of the dark abyss of despondency. Or, even if he could just imagine a condition like this, there is a world of difference between a wisdom gathered second-hand by hearing or observing the experiences of others, and that gained through the direct experience in one's own life. Therefore, the picture of this state, which Tota Puri could have formed in his mind, and the impressions of it in the mind of one who is actually undergoing these afflictions, must have been extremely dissimilar in their vividness. Hence it was that he remained quite unaware of the mischievous influence of Maya, the Primal Ignorance, which constitutes the *Shakti* or Power of the Supreme Lord. For the same reason, it is doubtful whether he could ever view the failings of a weak mind with sympathy. His attitude towards them was perhaps more akin to that of a ruthless critic. This imperfection in him was removed only by his contact with the Master in his capacity as the spiritual guide of mankind. In the end he recognised the power of Maya and realised that Brahman and Shakti (Power) are identical. Therefore, when he finally bid good-bye to Dakshineswar, he went away with his mind full of devo-

tion to the Mother, and his head bowing in honour of the Divine Shakti (Power). We shall now turn to this very topic.

### *Tota Puri's Ignorance of the Path of Devotion.*

The life-long celibate and austere ascetic that he was, Tota Puri, as remarked by the Bhairavi before, did actually cherish queer notions about the path of devotion. He could never understand that true love and devotion gradually teach one to sacrifice every thing in this world, including one's own happiness, for the sake of the Beloved, and lead one finally to God-realisation ; that in the maturity of devotion an aspirant attains to the knowledge of pure non-duality too ; and that, therefore, the repetition of the Lord's name, singing His praise, offering prayers to Him, and other practices auxiliary to this path do not deserve to be treated with indifference. On account of this ignorance, Tota Puri would not even refrain from making occasional taunting remarks about the emotional responses of a devotee. One should not, however, conclude from this that he was a sort of atheist, or that he was devoid of love for God. Naturally serene by temperament, and gifted with tranquillity, self-restraint and other pre-requisites of spiritual life, he was himself a devotee of the 'peaceful type' (*Shanta Bhava*), and could understand this kind of devotion in others too. But he was quite unaware that a spiritual aspirant may make speedy progress in attaining to the supreme Master and Maker of the universe even by adoring Him, through conceptions born of spiritual imagination, as the friend, child, husband or

wife. Therefore, the loving importunities of devotees of this type to God, their pangs of separation from Him, their yearnings for His company, their sense of pride born of devotion, with its accompanying love-quarrels with Him, and their laughing, dancing, wailing and other forms of behaviour brought about by the surge of intense emotion,—all these the Puri reckoned as but forms of eccentricity, and he failed to realise how an aspirant could reach the goal quickly by following such a path. As a result, frictions would often arise between the Puri and the Master over the propriety of cherishing intense devotion for the Mother of the Universe, the *Shakti* of Brahman, and over the above-mentioned forms of behaviour in the path of devotion.

*"Why are you flattening bread?"*

From his very childhood, the Master was in the habit of repeating aloud, both morning and evening, beating time with his hands and sometimes dancing in ecstasy: "Take the name of Hari, O take His name!"; "Hari is the same as the Guru, the Guru is identical with Hari"; "O Hari, my soul! O Govinda, my life!"; "Mind is Krishna, life is Krishna, knowledge is Krishna, contemplation is Krishna, realisation is Krishna, intellect is Krishna"; "Thou art the world, the world is in Thee"; "I am a machine, and Thou art the Mechanic." This daily habit continued as before even after he attained to the Nirvikalpa Samadhi through the Vedantic knowledge of non-duality.

One day, sitting at the Panchavati, the Master was engaged in conversation with Tota Puri on various religious topics. The day was

coming to a close. Seeing that it was sunset, the Master stopped the conversation and began to commune with the deity in the manner described above with the clapping of the palms. Thereupon Tota Puri was overwhelmed with wonder and thought within himself: "He is so highly qualified an aspirant of the path of Vedanta that he attained to Nirvikalpa Samadhi in the short period of three days. How could he then follow these practices meant only for a beginner in spiritual life?" At last, openly commenting in a taunting vein, he said, "Well, why are you flattening *Chapatīs*?" The reference is to the custom in vogue among the people of the North-Western Provinces of beating the dough for bread into shape with the palms, instead of flattening it with instruments. At this the Master could not help laughing. "How silly!" he exclaimed, "I am taking the name of the Lord, and you say I am flattening *Chapatīs*!" This simple answer made the Puri also burst into a laughter, and he understood that this behaviour of the Master was not without significance. He thought that there must be some hidden meaning behind the Master's conduct, which he could not grasp because of his prejudice against it, and that it was better therefore for him not to raise any more objections.

*How Tota Puri gave up anger*

Another day, after sunset, the Master was seated with the Puri by the side of his *Dhuni*. The continuous discussion of divine themes had raised their minds to a high spiritual pitch, and they were almost absorbed in the consciousness of the Non-dual Principle. The *Dhuni* fire by their side was

burning brightly. It looked as if the spirit of the fire was feeling its oneness with their Atman, and expressing the delight it was sharing with them by the dance of its numerous tongues of flame. Meanwhile one of the gardeners came there in quest of fire to light his *Chillum* (clay-pipe for smoking), and pulled aside a burning piece of wood from the *Dhuni* for this purpose. Wholly absorbed as Tota Puri was in conversation with the Master and in the blissful knowledge of the non-dual Brahman within, he had not so far noticed the man coming or pulling the fuel from the *Dhuni*. Now when his attention was suddenly directed to him, he felt extremely annoyed, and began to abuse him and even threatened to beat him with his tongs. For, as we have mentioned before, the monks of the Naga Order worship fire, and show great respect to it.

"Goodness gracious!" exclaimed the Master at this behaviour of the Puri, and began to roll with laughter. Somewhat surprised at this attitude

of the Master, Tota Puri asked him the reason thereof, and drew his attention to the improper behaviour of the servant. The Master who was still in that mood of laughter replied, "True, the servant's conduct is highly objectionable. But along with that I am also sounding the depth of your knowledge of Brahman. You had been just denying the existence of any second thing apart from Brahman, holding all objects and persons in this world as but manifestations of this One Principle; and the very next moment you have forgotten this, and are going to beat a man! Hence I laugh seeing the tremendous power of Maya." This comment of the Master made Tota Puri very serious. After keeping quiet for some time, he remarked, "Rightly said! Through anger I actually forgot everything. It is very bad, indeed. From to-day I must not be angry any more. I give it up once for all." And in fact the Swami was never found in an angry mood since that day.

## THE POWER OF RAMAKRISHNA

[What is the source of power in a spiritual man? What is it that helps his influence survive his mortal body? These questions are discussed in the following paragraphs with special reference to the personality of Sri Ramakrishna. It may be noted that the one year celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Centenary closes this month.]

### I

**T**HE following remarks about Sri Ramakrishna occur in a recent issue of the *Review of Religion* :—

"In connection with the Centenary a brief biography entitled 'Ramakrishna: the Man and the Power,' by Swami Gnaneshwarananda, has been published by the Vedanta Society of Chicago. Perhaps no religious leader of modern times is more difficult for the Western mind to accept than this illiterate priest of Kali who has so profoundly influenced the religious life

of India. And yet such scholars as Max Muller, Romain Rolland, and Rudolf Otto have found this eccentric mystic well worth a careful study. The psychological question arises whether a man of his type becomes a great mystic *because of*, or *in spite of*, his obviously psychopathic constitution, for all mystics are not psychopathic, and certainly all psychopaths are not mystics. It is superficially quite easy to psychoanalyse Ramakrishna, to find the 'mother-complex,' the latent bi-sexuality, etc., but none of these abnormalities explain the tremendous power he exerted

over the lives of men. The explanation of hypnotism is also too simple to be taken seriously. Even the sophisticated members of the Brahma Samaj, with their western education and contempt for the low forms of 'idol worship' in which Ramakrishna indulged, found something in him which commanded their respect and allegiance. What that 'something' was none of his biographers make clear. Swami Gnaneswarananda's little book, with its copious illustrations, celebrate this life, and exhibits something of its hold on Hindu piety, but leaves the central mystery still unsolved."

The writer of these lines seems to be genuinely puzzled as to the nature of the power that Ramakrishna exerted over men. Yet one is lead to doubt whether this puzzle is not due to a semi-conscious refusal to recognise that power, even when one is brought face to face with it. This is what one is lead to think when one notices his hesitating acceptance of the concepts of psycho-analysis like 'mother complex' and 'bi-sexuality' as explanations of what he considers to be the abnormalities in Ramakrishna. However valid these explanations may be in regard to mental degenerates, they become as meaningless as they are reprehensible when applied to personalities that transcend the human level in power and sublimity of character. In their case one has to speak of attunement with the Mother Heart at the back of the universe and not of 'mother complex,' of the transcendence of all sexuality and not of 'bi-sexuality.' To do otherwise would be to commit a great blunder in valuation by disregarding an important fact in their lives, *viz.*, that the centre of their consciousness has shifted from animality to Divinity, from body to spirit, from the ego to the larger life.

The writer of the passage quoted

before seems to be labouring under another misapprehension. He feels sure that it is only a few intellectual men of Europe like Max Muller, Romain Rolland and Rudolf Otto, who have been attracted by the personality of Ramakrishna, and that to the Westerners in general he is the least understandable among religious leaders of modern times. The fact however seems to be otherwise. That a good many people, both of the intellectual and non-intellectual classes, are being attracted to him in increasing numbers is the natural conclusion one arrives at when one notices how the literature connected with him is being fast translated into various European languages at the present time.

It is true that there is a class of persons in the West who find nothing worthy of admiration either in Ramakrishna, or, as for that, in any person or ideal Eastern. These are generally persons who are the victims of either imperialistic megalomania, or race prejudice, or the still worse obsession of saving the souls of heathens. Barring these, those people in the West, who are at all open to religious influences—whether they are intellectuals or not—, have always shown deep appreciation of the ideals and personality of Ramakrishna, whenever these have been properly presented to them. In fact the experience of some, who have had to represent his ideas in the West, is that his influence over men with genuine religious inclinations is almost contagious.

## II

What is the source of this fascinating influence exerted by him? The writer of the passage quoted before

seems to think that none of his biographers have succeeded in tracing that source. To our mind it appears that the peculiar quality of his greatness is so patent in every aspect of his life that no biographer need attempt to bring it out by any detailed analysis. The nature and source of his power was best described by Sri Ramakrishna himself when he said : "Seekest thou God ! Then seek Him in man. His divinity is manifest more in man than in any other object. Look around for a man whose heart overflows with the love of God, a man who lives, moves and has his being in God—a man intoxicated with his love. In such a man does God manifest himself."

To gain a closer understanding of these pregnant words we have to consider at some length certain aspects of mystic life which were abundantly illustrated in the life of Ramakrishna. If the mystic has got any message to deliver unto mankind, it is with regard to the spiritual environment of man. We are all quite aware of our physical and biological environment, as our daily life is determined by it, and is constituted of a series of demands and satisfactions from, and responses to, it. We feel hungry, and there is in our natural environment food to appease hunger. So, too, thirst and the need for air are implanted in our organism, and corresponding to, and in satisfaction of, them there are water and air in Nature. This law holds good even with regard to all our fundamental instinctive cravings. In the case of all these we notice two facts. First, when man does not gain legitimate satisfaction of his needs in respect of any of them, there is set up in him an organic craving for it, a craving that comes not from any one part of

his being alone, but the whole of it, consumes him as it were in its maddening intensity, and places him between the alternatives of either satisfying it, or sustaining some serious injury, if not the total destruction, of the organism. Second, in the case of all these organic needs, there is a close correspondence between them and the environment, i.e., if the craving is really organic with us, nature external to us has a corresponding object for its satisfaction, so that it would seem that the Nature within is nothing but an individualised organisation of Nature as the cosmic environment, and the craving represents the tendency of individualised Nature to rush back to its cosmic matrix. For these two reasons, namely, the intensity of the craving within and the satisfaction of it coming from without, we ordinarily feel no doubt with regard to our natural environment.

The same cannot, however, be said of what may be called the spiritual environment of man, and that is why people do not feel conviction with regard to its reality. It is here that the example of mystics in general, and of Sri Ramakrishna in particular, comes to the aid of one who feels dissatisfied with a naturalistic world-view, and feels an intellectual leaning towards the spiritual interpretation of experience. For in Ramakrishna we find an individual who manifested a craving for the spiritual that looks more elemental and basic with his nature than even the organic needs of the body which he shared with all men. Moreover, we also find this craving ultimately satisfied by a response from the spiritual environment as it were, giving us ground for belief in that environment on the analogy of our physical life. The



story of this quest and its ultimate fulfilment have been recorded with such wealth of detail that even at the distance of more than half a century we can get a hazy idea of the cyclonic nature of the passion, and the blessedness and vivid reality of the touch, that calmed it.

A possible objection may be raised that organic cravings are not the special property of stray individuals but the common feature of all members of a species, if not of all forms of life. But it has to be remembered that there are cravings like sex, which, though even literally organic, i.e., one with the body, yet become manifest only at a certain stage of maturity. This is even more true with regard to the faculties of the mind. May it not be that this craving for God, which comes out of all that is best in the nature of man, makes itself visibly felt in a person only at a stage of mental adulthood, which our physical adults generally have not reached? One of those adults, so rare in this world, was Ramakrishna, and what wonder if his giant stature has produced a sensation among the spiritual babies of our world!

### III

Granted that the spiritual struggles of Ramakrishna were unique. Granted also that these struggles ended with a feeling of inner triumph and satisfaction. But how are we to understand from this that the response came really from a higher level of being? A consideration of this question brings us to the second source of power in Ramakrishna. According to all mystic traditions, the Deity transcends all intellectual concepts. He is more than all that our

minds can conceive of 'even in its most ambitious flights. Yet He expresses Himself in this manifested world, and, as the Bhagvad Gita says, all that is characterised by great splendour is in a special sense his revelation. Thus, though the Deity in His entirety is beyond the powers of the human mind, yet in these manifestations of His man finds an avenue of approach to Him. For if he approaches them in the proper mood of mind, they stir him to the deepest core of his being, and evoke in him a brooding sense of the might and the mystery behind the universe. They also help him to understand what those special characteristics that evoke in him a sense of the Deity are, and to crystallise these into intellectual concepts of the transcendent Deity. These concepts come to be recognised as the attributes of the Deity, and in themselves serve as symbols or reminders of the Supreme even in the absence of concrete objects from the observance of which we have learnt to associate these qualities with Him.

Every religion is a collection of such mutually adapted symbols—intellectual, ethical, artistic, literary and ritualistic—drawn from our cultural memories and racial experiences for evoking in us, in some way or other, a sense of the transcendent Reality at the back of the universe. The nature of these symbols and attributes relied upon for kindling divine passions in the heart depends on the cultural and spiritual level of the individuals and groups concerned. The Bhagavad Gita gives us a very intelligent classification of them when it describes the Divine as Supreme Power (Param Brahma), Supreme Light (Param Dhama) and

Utter Holiness (Pavitram Paramam). The creator of this unimaginably vast and stupendous universe is Brahman (the Great Being), and he impresses us in the first place as a boundless power. To the naive mind God is nothing if not the mightiest of beings, and it is therefore in power attribute and power symbolisms that it finds an opening to the supra-rational mystery of the universe. For one at a higher stage of spiritual refinement, God comes to mean increasingly the Light of Intelligence and Consciousness,—He in whose glory all our worldly knowledge is only ignorance, in whose light the brilliance of even our heavenly luminaries is but darkness. Hence light symbolisms and attributes of luminosity, both as external brilliance and as omniscience, become increasingly the suggestive ideograms of the infinite for man at this stage of development. But the most exalted concept of God known to the human mind—a concept drawn from the most sublime manifestation of God in personality—is that of the utterly Holy (Paramam Pavitram). Power and intelligence are no doubt implied in this conception, but they are refined to an absolutely incorporeal degree of fineness, enlivened by an ethical ardour, and above all rendered subservient to an exultant sense of sanctity, sublimity and redemptive grace. In the higher forms of every great religion, we find a great stress on this aspect of the Deity, and a refinement of symbolism and ideals calculated to develop a consciousness of the Holy in the minds of its followers. But it is only a few endowed with a certain standard of mental purity that show a susceptibility to this higher aspect of religion. The many are satisfied

with God as power, and even when they seem to show an interest in Holiness, they do so only from material considerations.

Now in understanding the secret of Ramakrishna's power, and in estimating the value of his spiritual strivings, the importance of symbols in rousing up genuine religious feeling ought to be kept in mind. For the power which Ramakrishna wields over the lives of men to-day is to be largely accounted for by the fact that he has become for many the best symbol of the Deity as holiness, which, as we said before, is the aspect of Godhead most appealing to genuine spiritual aspirants. A symbol is valued in proportion to its inherent capacity to evoke the consciousness of the object it symbolises. Through power symbols and light symbols man can, no doubt, obtain an awareness of the Supreme, but it is through the symbol of holiness that men with genuine spiritual inclinations discover the Deity in all His glory. And in Ramakrishna, many, irrespective of racial and cultural considerations, have discovered such a symbol. In himself he is such a blazing fire of holiness made manifest to the eye of humanity that men who come across his life and teachings not only renew their extinguished flame of faith from him, but also gain an idea of that Supreme Fountain of Holiness, of which Ramakrishna is a manifestation. In his personality the mystery of God stands revealed to those who care to look at it.

These are the days of new morality which teaches man that he is merely a natural being, and that all ideas of transcending the limitations of body and mind which Nature has imposed

on man are only idle dreams. The 19th century biology, it is said, showed the human body to be a lineal descendant of the animal kingdom. This doctrine has been supplemented and perfected by the 20th century psychology, according to which the stuff of human mind is only a texture of animal instincts. New morality takes its stand on similar findings of science, and tells man in a tone of assurance that to give full expression to his instinctive urges is the only way to live a happy and harmonious life. It explains away the sense of sin as an illusion, and conscience as a product of cowardice. As a consequence, while in the past even men who lived evil lives felt that they were living evil lives, our moderns who have imbibed the spirit of new morality exult in their sin, and refuse to recognise any standard of virtue, purity and holiness, except perhaps what has a bearing on efficiency in the collective life of societies. And all the justification which such a view of life has on its side is derived from the denial of anything in human nature that transcends the instincts of the natural man, and deserves to be called holy in any sense.

To many the life and teachings of a personage like Ramakrishna seems to be a direct challenge to this theory of life, and a clear refutation of its view of the nature of man. For in him we find a thorough transformation of the values of life as the natural man perceives them, and an entire transcendence of all those carnal and brutish instincts in which new morality finds its support and justification. To one who is dissatisfied with what is called the normal life—that is, life lived entirely for the senses and within the limits imposed

by them—, his personality reveals a new facet of human nature, the hidden springs of holiness and divinity in it, and this gives one a new support in life and a new hope and aspiration to strive after.

Thus in Ramakrishna we get the best human symbol of holiness, which is God. His spiritual strivings and realisations are to be taken as valid and in agreement with the deepest truth of the universe, because they form the sole explanation of the power he embodied in life, namely, the divine characteristic of holiness which could dispel the corruptions of even a cesspool mind. In his biography we get ample evidence of the sanctifying influence that used to radiate from his personality and transform the lives of men by miracle, as it were. But this in itself would not have made him continue to be a power in the spiritual realm even after his exit from this stage of the world, had it not been for the fact that an ever-increasing number of men are discovering the most perfect symbol of Divinity in the very imprint his personality has left on the history of human thought and achievement—a symbol of holiness that could excite in them an awareness of God and impart in some measure at least the radiance and elation of that highest category in the scale of valuation. It is also to be noted that unlike in the case of ordinary religious symbols, there is in him a universality of appeal that transcends the limitations of countries and cultures and goes straight into the heart of man, provided there is in it, in some measure at least, a dissatisfaction with the life of the senses, and a yearning for holiness. If one cares to discover the power of Rama-

krishna, one must look for it in this direction.

#### IV

One may, however, say at this that we had many such holy men like Buddha and Christ in the past, and that therefore there is no reason to find any special significance in Ramakrishna in this respect. But such an objector forgets that men of the 20th century are keenly historical. To those of them who have shed their allegiance to Churches and traditional beliefs, the lives of these prophets of old, as they are preserved to-day, have largely ceased to be an adequate foundation for faith. They lived several hundreds of years ago, when the problems of men were in many respects different from ours. What is more, the authentic sources of information regarding their lives and teachings are meagre and ill-preserved, and time and credulity of men have done such havoc with even these that it is almost impossible to-day to distinguish the wood from the tree. All this often proves very hard a trial on the historical sense of many, and we, therefore, meet with a disposition on their part to doubt the very historicity of some of the

great religious leaders of the past. To such an age, there is undoubtedly a special appeal in Ramakrishna, whose personality was a breathing, palpitating reality in our midst a few decades back, and the details of whose daily life and conversations have been faithfully recorded by men who have had the benefit of a modern education, and who lived with him intimately and observed him in a reverent yet critical spirit. This nearness of Ramakrishna to us in time, and the existence of unquestionable historical records about his life and teachings make him significant in a special sense to a seeker after Truth at the present day. Nay, to many, the ideal of holiness exemplified in the life of the God-men of the past became feasible of credence only through him.

To conclude, therefore, Ramakrishna's increasing influence on the minds of men is to be accounted for by these three considerations:— (1) that he gives us a clue to the spiritual environment of man, (2) that his personality forces itself on the attention of men as a universal symbol of holiness, and (3) that he satisfies the historical sense of the modern man.

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# THE ESSENCE OF HINDUISM

*By Mahatma Gandhi*

[It is always interesting to know what constitutes the essence of a religion according to a great representative of it, who lives the truth embodied in it in his daily life. Mahatma Gandhi's ideal of Hinduism is noteworthy from this point of view. The article is a compilation of relevant passages from the several speeches delivered by him in Travancore during his recent visit to that State in connection with the Temple Entry Proclamation.]

**I** CLAIM to have understood the tenets of Hinduism for the unbroken period of fifty years, and have endeavoured in humble and imperfect manner to follow them. Let me for a moment consider what is it that Hinduism consists of. Why has it inspired so many saints about whom we have historical records? Why has it captivated so many philosophers of the world? If you believe, as I know some do, that Hinduism is nothing but a body of hideous usages and superstitions, that Hinduism is a fraud upon humanity, you cannot (the address was delivered specially to a Christian audience) render any assistance to caste Hindus. But I know many Christians do not regard Hinduism as a fraud upon humanity, or as a body of superstitious usages. A religion which has produced Ramakrishna, Chaitanya, Sankara and Vivekananda cannot be a body of superstitions. As I know, and, if you do not know it, I want to declare, that I personally hold that all principal religions of the world are not only true but should also be respected. I have endeavoured to study the Bible and the Quaran with the eyes of devout Christian and Mussalman. I have not hesitated to assimilate whatever I have found to be good in both these scriptures. If I declare thus and remain a Hindu, it is because of this.

I have found in the original Vedas the essence of Hinduism. That essence is—God pervades in everything and God is the Ruler, Creator and Lord of the world. He being the undisputable and unchallengeable Master, we dedicate everything to Him every day, and He provides our wants. This faith is enunciated in the first Mantra of the Isa Upanishad.\* The essence of Hinduism is briefly, but equally brilliantly, given inspite of untouchability in this first Mantra of the Isa Upanishad. The meaning of this Mantra in a nutshell is that all are created by the one God, and that all must enjoy in common what God has given, and that one should not covet another's wealth. God, according to that Mantra, is Ruler, Master and Lord, and pervades all this universe to the tiniest atom. It means He is not merely in your and my hearts, but he is literally and absolutely in every one of the innumerable things, in the bones of your body and in the hairs of your head. Therefore He is nearer to me and you than our dearest ones. That

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\* ॐ ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत् किं च जगत्॥  
जगत् ।

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः मा गृधः कस्य स्विद् धनम्॥

All this, whatsoever exists in the universe, is the vesture of the Lord. Having renounced (the unreal), enjoy (the Real). Do not covet the wealth of any man.

is the essence of Hinduism, and we realise that truth in this magnificent Mantra as we realise that you are sitting here and listening to me.

Having realised that truth, the seer who has given this Mantra to the world proceeds to say that since God is near to us and dominates all our actions, we must voluntarily resign and dedicate at His feet all that we have hitherto in our presumption and ignorance regarded as our own. God provides everything, and nothing belongs to us, He being their indisputable and unchangeable master. The Mantra next says—'Covet not anybody else's riches.' But only after that act of conscious and deliberate renunciation and dedication we shall have to eat, cloth ourselves and house ourselves. For that the Mantra says—After having dedicated, you enjoy and use all the necessities of life given to you by God Himself with His own sacred hands.

Now this requires the same trust, the same faith and the same love that a child without reasoning out things for itself has towards its parents. The child never reasons for itself and it depends upon its parents for its supply. The parents are as much mortal as the children. It is infinitely more logical of us then that we should have at least as much faith and trust in God to give us food and cloth.

Just as we require food for the body, so also we require, in the shape of prayers, food for the soul, for we know and recognise that there is something besides our body. If you try prayer for some time sincerely, you will discover with me that whereas you may go without bodily food for some time even with profit, you may not desire to go without the

spiritual food. Some sort of evening prayer before retiring to bed is necessary. If prayers are offered both in the morning and evening, you will soon find that a time will come when you will be disgusted if you omit to offer prayers. Since there are millions in this country who cannot even recite Bhajanas, our forefathers have discovered a method which is a mere recital of the name of God whom you recognise as Rama, Krishna or by thousands of other names.

Even if all the Hindu Scriptures were reduced to ashes, if this one Mantra of the Isa Upanishad alone remained embedded in the memory of the Hindus, it would be sufficient for Hinduism to abide for ever. The Bhagavad Gita which has been my Kamadhenu (the mythical cow that yields all one desires) in all difficult times was based on the truth embedded in that Mantra. The last 19 verses of the 2nd Chapter of the Bhagavad Gita are reminders to every Hindu of how he should conduct himself on earth.

I venture to suggest to my Christian friends throughout the whole world and to Mussalmans also that they cannot find anything more in their scriptures to seriously oppose this doctrine. Therefore I want the Christians of Travancore to aid the Hindus to realise the lofty purpose that is given in the Mantra. This doctrine means that one's life must be a life of continuous service to fellow creatures. This doctrine must satisfy the cravings of even the philosophical communist. The spiritual regeneration of an individual or a nation must mean the regeneration of every department of man's life, economic and social. I say this is my faith, and should be the faith of

every Hindu, whether he knows it or not.

Now if you believe in this Mantra which contains an universal truth, then there can be no distinction among the Hindus, as that which is now sapping the very foundation of Hinduism and Hindu society. From this you will realise at once why temples are, and must be, an integral part of our lives. We are so easily forgetful of our obligations that we must renew our oath of loyalty to God, *viz.*, renunciation and dedication to God every day. These temples then are the visible symbol of God's power and authority. They are therefore truly called Houses of God and Houses of Prayer. We go there in a prayerful mood and offer prayer which should be the first thing in the morning after the ablutions, the prayer being the act of dedication and surrender. Temple-going means dedication of everything to God and is nothing less and nothing else. I want you to realise this deep spiritual significance. One must have the proper attitude of mind before he could derive the highest spiritual consolation and the highest spiritual joy from visiting these temples. Temples are an integral part of our life. Scoffers and sceptics may say that all this is a figment of the imagination. Imagination is a powerful factor in life. Temples are Houses of God for mankind.

I am painfully conscious of many superstitions in Hinduism. Nevertheless, I remain a Hindu because I do not believe the essence of Hinduism

is inconsistent with the truth of other religions. I am convinced that peace on earth and good will among mankind will reign if we approach the humblest of mankind in prayerful spirit and do not indulge in vain religious disputations.

I leave this Mantra with you in the belief that whatever is inconsistent with the meaning of this Mantra you will summarily reject as not Hinduism. There are other scriptures of Hinduism also, and far be it from me to say that all of them are worthless and harmful. They are undoubtedly works which to-day pass current as Hindu Sastras. There are also priceless treasures hidden in all these books. But you and I have not the time to study them. Even if you have time, they ought to be studied with great caution. These studies of Hindu scriptures may confuse your minds and befog you. The Mantra which I have explained to you is sufficient for spiritual consolation. I want you to believe that the Mantra I referred to will satisfy all your aspirations. If you are to really blossom forth into real Hindus, you must take this message to *Parayas* and *Pulayas*. A religious revival like this should come throughout India.

Remember one's religion ought to be totally independent of the conduct of other people, with the belief that God is the Guide, Master and Ruler of everything. May you have the strength to live up to the true ideal of Hinduism !

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# THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY .

*By Swami Prabhavananda*

[Swami Prabhavananda is the leader of the Vedanta Society of Hollywood. The Swami emphasises in this article that the main function of philosophy in India has always been to help man in developing his inner life.]

**ARSHANA**, which is usually translated as "philosophy," in Sanskrit means "seeing" or "experience." From this we may gather that Indian philosophy is not merely metaphysical speculation, but has its foundation in the immediate data of experience. The verities of life, God, the soul, and the nature of ultimate reality, are regarded by the Hindu mind, not as concepts speculative and problematical, as is the case in Western philosophy, but as definitely experienced truths. These ultimate truths can be experienced not merely by a chosen few, but under right conditions, by all humanity.

This insistence upon direct experience rather than abstract reasoning is what distinguishes Indian Philosophy from philosophy as Western nations know it. This direct experience is the source from which flows all Indian thought, and it is the accepted basis of all Indian speculation.

This experience, it must be made clear, is not of the senses, nor must it be confused with the operations of the intellect or with emotional experience ; it is super-sensuous, transcendental, not to be completely explained in rational terms. The *Mandukya Upanishad* speaks of four states of consciousness, — waking, dreaming, dreamless sleep, and the *turiya* or the fourth. The first three states are common to all. The fourth, though latent in every human being, is not expressly

manifest in all. When this fourth, the transcendental state of consciousness, is developed in the soul of an individual, the truth which had before been but an intellectual abstraction, becomes a living reality definitely experienced in one's own soul. Indian philosophers call this transcendental state by various names, but all of them unmistakably point to the same goal.

From the foregoing we may comprehend the relation between Indian religion and Indian philosophy. Religion to a Hindu is not, however, the common Western conception of faith, nor does it merely comprise dogmas and creeds, but rather is it *anubhuti*—realisation and experience. One of the greatest saints of modern India, and my spiritual master, Swami Brahmananda, once told me, "Spiritual life begins *after* one enters into *samadhi* (the transcendental state)." Religion is therefore not divorced from philosophy ; the latter in fact is an attempt to present ultimate truths, *already realised in experience* in terms of the rationalising intellect.

Professor Max Muller has declared that philosophy was recommended in India "not for the sake of knowledge, but for the highest purpose that man can strive after in this life." In India, philosophers are saints, and saints are philosophers.

This fact of *samadhi* or the transcendental state of consciousness, is a



*matter of experience throughout the whole history of Indian life.* To-day as well as in earliest times, it has been experienced. Sri Ramakrishna, the greatest saint of modern India, though not a learned man, attained *samadhi*, and, having realised the highest illumination, spoke words of solace and wisdom to all men. So also this state is attainable by many a one who strives to purify himself from the dross of this world.

The Hindu mind, however, is careful not to confuse reveries, dreams, hallucinations, and hypnotic spells with transcendental experience. So certain proofs of its validity and its relation both to life in general and to reason in particular are taken into consideration.

The first condition or test of this transcendental truth must be, in the words of Jaimini (founder of the Purva Mimamsa school of thought) "*arthe anupalabdhe*"—that is, that the revelation should be related to "something which is otherwise unknown and unknowable." This transcendental revelation is therefore not a revelation of things or truths normally perceived, or generally known, not of truths capable of perception and of being known through the ordinary instruments of knowledge. And yet this transcendental truth must be universally understandable in relation to human experience, and must be communicated to us in terms of known experience.

The next condition, or test of truth, is that the revealed truth must not contradict other *pramanas* or proofs. It is necessarily beyond and above reason, but it must not contradict reason. It should be something not unreasonable, but should

rather satisfy the most exacting reason.

Thus Indian philosophy, though having its foundations in personal revelation, gives a legitimate place to logic and reason, and there has never been any check to the growth of philosophic thinking. In fact, no race has produced a succession of more subtle or more rigidly logical thinkers than the Hindus ; only without exception they have declared that reason unaided by transcendental experience is blind. Those who are called orthodox philosophers, as we shall see, accept the Vedic Scriptures as recording revealed truths ; and they make these scriptures a point of departure for their reasoning. Sankara, one of the foremost philosophers of India, has this to say concerning the part reason plays in the investigation of truth : "As the thoughts of man are altogether unfettered, reasoning which disregards the holy texts and rests on individual opinion has no proper foundation. We see how arguments, which some clever men had excogitated with great pains, are shown by people still more ingenious, to be fallacious, and how the arguments of the latter again are refuted in their turn by other men ; so that, on account of the diversity of men's opinions, it is impossible to accept mere reasoning as having a sure foundation." \*

\* Sankara, while explaining the final cause and substance of the Universe, further remarks as follows : "Perfect knowledge has the characteristic mark of uniformity because it depends on accomplished actually existing things ; for whatever thing is permanently of one and the same nature is acknowledged to be a true or real thing, and knowledge conversant about such is called perfect knowledge ; as, for instance, the knowledge embodied in

The systems of Indian philosophy fall into main divisions according as they do or do not accept the authority of the Vedas. That is to say, all systems except Buddhism and Jainism are pronounced *Astika*; the two latter, which deny the authority of the great primary scriptures, are *Nastika*—orthodox believers and heterodox unbelievers. If, however, we accept the literal meaning of the word *Astika* as belief in after-life, then all systems of thought, with the exception of the materialism of Charvaka, are *Astika*.

What Charvaka really taught, or whether there was a philosopher the proposition, 'Fire is hot.' Now it is clear that in the case of perfect knowledge a mutual conflict of men's opinions is impossible. But that cognitions founded on reasoning do conflict is generally known; for we continually observe that what one logician endeavours to establish as perfect knowledge is demolished by another, who, in his turn, is treated alike by a third. How, therefore, can knowledge, which is founded on reasoning, and whose object is not something permanently uniform, be perfect knowledge? Nor can we collect at a given moment and on a given spot all the logicians of the past, present, and future time, so as to settle that their opinion regarding some uniform object is to be considered perfect knowledge. The Veda, on the other hand, which is eternal and the source of knowledge, may be allowed to have for its object firmly established things, and hence the perfection of that knowledge which is founded on the Veda cannot be denied by any of the logicians of the past, present, or future. We have thus established the perfection of this our knowledge which reposes on the Upanishad, and as apart from it, perfect knowledge is impossible. Our final position, therefore, is that on the ground of Scripture and of reasoning subordinate to Scripture, the intelligent Brahman is to be considered the cause and substance of the world." (From the translation of Sankara's commentary on the Vedanta Sūtras, by G. Thibaut.)

named Charvaka at all, it is difficult to know, for we hear of him only through the refutation of his philosophy of sensualism by various schools of thought. It is, in effect, but the simple philosophy of Scepticism which runs as a cross-current in every age and every country. The name Charvaka literally means "sweet word."

Some Oriental scholars translate this word *Nastika* as atheism. But if this meaning of the word is applied to Buddhism and Jainism because they reject an anthropomorphic God, then many of the orthodox schools are similarly at fault. The Sankya philosophy, for example, denies God as Creator, yet it is held to be orthodox.

Curiously, no equivalent in Sanskrit for the word "atheism" exists. In the *Gita* mention is made of those who do not believe in God, the Intelligent Principle, and these are said to be of "deluded intellect."

We have declared that the *Vedas* or *Sruti* (the revealed truths) stand as an absolute authority *behind* which the orthodox schools cannot go. In this sense they might, to the mind of a superficial reader, compare with the authority of the Holy Bible in many periods of Christian thought; but in the words of Sir S. Radhakrishnan, "This appeal to the *Vedas* does not involve any reference to any extra philosophical standard. What is dogma to the ordinary man is experience to the pure in heart." With the exception of Buddhism and Jainism, all schools of thought regard the *Vedas* as recording the transcendental experience of the first mighty seers of ancient India. These experiences, because they have become standard for all Hindus, cannot and should not

contradict those in any other age. Furthermore they are the truths experienced and experiencable in every age and every country by all who are pure in heart. For this reason, all Hindus believe that the *Vedas* are eternal, beginningless and without end. Transcendental experience therefore has received its standard expression in these Indo-Aryan Scriptures.

It is true that, though all orthodox Indian philosophers regard the *Vedas* as eternal—without beginning or end—, some limit these eternal laws to the records in the *Vedas*—the Indo-Aryan Scriptures. Transcendental experiences in other ages and other countries, though not denied their due authority, are regarded by them not as *Vedas* or *Sruti*, but as *Agamas*. A distinction is thus drawn between the *Vedas* and the *Agamas*, though the *Vedas* are still regarded as beginningless and endless. In the words of the learned Professor M. Hiriyanna, "We may deduce a distinction between the two from a fourth condition sometimes laid down (*cf.* Kusumanjali II, 3), that the revealed truth should have proved acceptable to the general mind of the community (*Mahajana*—*parigraha*), or that it should be in harmony with what may be described as race-intuition. It is this sanction of the community in general that in the end seems to distinguish orthodox *Sruti* from heterodox *Agama*."

This distinction is arbitrary and seems opposed to the very definition and spirit of the *Vedas*. Whatever a particular community may or may not sanction, a revealed truth is a direct experience, and as such it must be in the same category of revealed truth as the *Vedas*. But at the same time, we must naturally exert great care, in

judging the validity of any particular revelation, that it does not contradict the experiences of other seers and the recorded standard experiences that we may read in the Indo-Aryan *Vedas*.

What then of Buddhism and Jainism? Shall we discard them from among the highest expressions of Indian thought? They do in fact accept the authority of revealed knowledge and transcendental experience, though they deny the authority of the *Vedas*, particularly of the ritualistic portions, as a result of certain particular historical circumstances. They were born at a time when the spirit of the *Vedas* had been lost, and the Hindus held faithfully to the letter of the law, and priestcraft reigned supreme. Religion then confined itself to sacrificial rites. The intense craving to know the truth of the Self or Brahman in one's own soul, which is perceived only by the pure in heart was forgotten. Buddha, though he denied the authority of the *Vedas*, actually impressed their real spirit upon his followers by urging them to live the life of pure conduct in order to free themselves from the burden of sorrow. And he showed the way by himself attaining Nirvana or the transcendental state of consciousness.

Thus the teachings of Buddha as well as those of Mahavira, founder of Jainism, do not contradict the spirit of the *Vedas* but are in entire harmony with it.

From the foregoing it can be readily seen that Indian philosophy is fundamentally mystic and spiritual. "Indian Philosophy," says Professor M. Hiriyanna, "aims beyond logic. This peculiarity is to be ascribed to the fact that philosophy in India did not

take its rise in wonder or curiosity as it seems to have done in the West ; rather under the pressure of a practical need arising from the presence of physical evil in life. It is the problem of how to remove this evil that troubled the ancient Indians most, and the *moksha* in all the systems represents a state in which it is, in one sense or another, taken to have been overcome. Philosophic endeavour was directed primarily to find a remedy for the ills of life and the consideration of metaphysical questions came in as a matter of course."

This is the central problem of Indian philosophy—an overmastering sense of the evil of physical existence, combined with a search for release from pain and sorrow—, and in this respect, it is distinguished from the philosophies of any other race or country. And it leads us to a consideration of the charge of pessimism brought against it by the West,—the charge that it springs, as Chailley declares, "from lassitude and a desire for rest." This criticism by those, who, as in the West, seek fulfilment through positive aggressive action, arises from a misunderstanding of the purpose of Indian philosophy. This philosophy is pessimistic if by that word is meant the acknowledgement of the nature of life in this world, that it is a strange mingling of good and evil, that life on the plane of the senses yields but a doubtful happiness, and that physical and moral evils continue to the end of our mortal existence. The distinctive characteristic of Indian philosophy lies in the fact that it is not merely dissatisfied with existing suffering, but that it points out the path towards the attainment of *moksha*, or release, and discovers for the devotee a state

of unalloyed and infinite bliss and freedom from all earthly suffering.

Philosophers differ, however, with respect to the exact nature of this goal of *moksha*, and of the methods to be employed in attaining it ; and these differences make up the substance of Hindu speculation. They are due to the varying grades of experience in realising transcendental life rather than to a great diversity of opinion with respect to it. And of course it is above all due to the attempt to express the inexpressible.

In one thing, however, they all agree. That is that *spiritual* perfection can be attained in this life. "Man's aim," says Professor Hiriyanna, "was no longer represented as the attainment of perfection in a hypothetical hereafter, but a continual progress towards it within the limits of the present life." *Moksha*, or the attainment of freedom from the limitations and sufferings of physical life is the supreme aspiration of Indian philosophy.†

Sankara, speaking of the supreme goal of human life, says, "A man is born not to desire life in the world of the senses, but to realise the bliss of *Jivanmukti*." And the Upanishads over and over emphasise this truth,

† The Purva Mimamsa, one of the six philosophical systems of India, is an apparent exception to what we have just said, for it does not speak of *moksha* or release, but rather teaches work and sacrifices. But, though this philosophy does not include *moksha* as the direct goal of its striving, indirectly it does. For work, as taught by Jaimini, brings purification of the heart, which leads one to *moksha*. If, however, we take Purva and Uttara Mimamsa as forming one system of thought, then we may declare that, without exception, Indian philosophies set forth *Moksha* as the ultimate goal, which may be attained in this life.

"Blessed is he who attains illumination in this very life ; otherwise it is his greatest calamity." But it is immediately pointed out that if a man fails to attain the supreme goal in this life, he must attain it in some other life, for he will be given many opportunities by rebirths to reach the goal of perfection.

This failure to attain direct experience of the truth, and consequently freedom, is due to man's ignorance, which is universal and is the chief cause of sin and suffering. It can be dispelled by direct knowledge of ultimate truth through purification of the heart and a constant search for detachment of the soul from worldly desires. By transcending the limitations of the body, the mind, and the senses, one may enter the superconscious state of experience.

The methods of attaining this higher state of consciousness are hearing, reasoning, and meditating upon the ultimate reality. One must first hear of it from the Sruti, or the Vedas. Then one must reason upon It. Finally comes meditation upon It in order to realise the truth for oneself. Different schools offer different methods of attaining the same goal, and the practice of Yoga, or the exercises prescribed for the art of concentration and meditation, constitute a salient part of Indian religious life.

To tread the path of philosophy is to seek the truth and follow the way of life. Before a man sets out on his quest for truth, he must fulfill certain conditions. Sankara sums them up as follows : First, there must be a discrimination between the real and the unreal. This statement means not that he must possess a complete knowledge of absolute

reality, which is attained only as a culmination of long practice, but that he must unfailingly subject the nature of things to a rigid analysis by discriminating between what is transitory and what is abiding.

The second condition is detachment from the selfish enjoyments of this or a future life. The devotee must learn that the highest good is realised, not through material pleasure, but through a continuous search for the Infinite, the abiding joy. This ideal of renunciation must be realised by a gradual purification of the seeker's heart and soul. So a third condition is prescribed whereby the student may acquire tranquillity of the mind, self-control, patience, poise, burning faith in the ideal, and surrendering of the self to God. These are called the six treasures of life. The thirst for *moksha* or freedom is the fourth condition. "The people of India," says Sir S. Radhakrishnan, "have such an immense respect for these philosophers who glory in the might of knowledge and the power of intellect, that they worship them. The prophetic souls, who with a noble passion for truth, strive hard to understand the mystery of the world and give utterance to it spending laborious days and sleepless nights, are philosophers in a vital sense of the term."

Deliverance from ignorance and entrance upon the path of illumination comes only through annihilation of the false ego. "When the ego dies, all troubles cease," says Sri Ramakrishna, one of the greatest saints of modern India. Such a condition of being does not, however, imply the loss of one's individuality, but rather the attainment of a greater individuality, for we can lose nothing that

is real. Kalidas, the great Hindu dramatist, has beautifully expressed the matter by saying that the ideal of renunciation consists in "owning the whole world while drowning one's own self."

What then is the relation of psychology and ethics to Indian religious philosophy? The science of psychology as Westerners know it is man's attempt to explain the operations of his mind with reference to his body and the stimuli received through his senses. Ethics is the formulation of the law of conduct as man faces his multifarious activities as a social being. Do these two interpretations of man's material living enter into the considerations of the philosophies of India?

They do, in a very definite way. As a matter of fact, Indian philosophy and Indian psychology are not merely allied subjects, but the latter is actually an integral part of the former. To the Hindu mind, psychology has its inception in the thinking self and not in the objects of thought. It is not content with merely stating the working of the mind in the normal planes of consciousness as is the case with our modern systems of behaviourism, but it points out how the mind ranges beyond the ordinary conscious plane of psychic activity, and how the resulting experiences are even more real than the experiences of the objective world. It also differs from the psycho-analysis of Freud in that, though it accepts the sub-conscious mind, it claims that man is capable of controlling his sub-conscious impressions as well as his conscious mind, and of attaining to the super-conscious state, which no school of Western psychology has yet taken

into consideration. By teaching the normal mind methods of training, to restrain its vagaries with the aim of gaining supreme mastery over it, and of ultimately rising above it, Indian philosophy sets itself apart from all other systems of either philosophy or psychology. The Yoga system of Patanjali deals specifically with this process of mental control.

The problem of ethics is also a problem of Indian philosophy. Though not actually identified with Hindu philosophy, ethics is its very foundation. Philosophy seeks to transcend the mere *life of conduct* so that ethics remains the means for its own supererogation. Moreover, Hindu ethics concerns itself not only with outer human activity, but extends to inner life as well. Every teaching is conditioned by the phrase, "in word, thought, and deed." Ways and methods of conduct are explicitly revealed which, if followed, will enable one naturally to express good conduct. The emphasis is laid upon the ultimate transformation of the whole being when one rises above the injunctions of moral codes. "He is not troubled by thoughts," we find in the Upanishads, "like these: Have I not done the right? Have I done the wrong?" Bhavabhuti, a Sanskrit poet, says appropriately: "An ordinary man is truthful when the words follow the fact. But the saint's words are followed by facts." Such is the relation between saintliness and truthfulness.

Indian philosophy is thus not a mere way of thinking but a way of life, a way of light, and a way of truth. To become a philosopher is to become transformed in life, renewed in mind, and baptised in spirit.

# MEDITATIONS: WHAT IS YOGA?

*By Anilbaran Ray*

[Sjt. Anilbaran Ray describes the ideal of a true spiritual aspirant in the following meditations.]

## I

**T**O live according to the truth of our being is our Sadhana (spiritual practice). All our life is an attempt to express that truth but ordinarily it is a blind and groping attempt which constantly leads to perversion and falsehood. Consciously to know the truth and realise that in our life—that is Yoga.

We have to change and mould our body, our life, our mind so as to make them plastic instruments, perfect vehicles of the truth ; but the beliefs and habits ingrained in them are the greatest obstacles to such a change. The body does not believe that the laws known to it and followed by it can never be changed or altered, and it is the same with the vital and the mental parts—nowhere is there the light of true consciousness, the belief in higher divine possibilities. Our movements go on eternally in a blind, groping, mechanical series.

The first essential thing is to hold fast to the faith in our divine possibilities in every part of our being, the faith that our whole nature can be and has to be completely changed and transformed. Established firmly in this faith, freeing ourselves from all ignorant notions of impossibilities, we should open every part of our being to the Divine Mother, and ceaselessly and sincerely aspire to the higher divine life. Only under these conditions will the truth manifest in us and mould us into its own nature.

## II

Let me merge my personality completely in Thee, Mother, so that no trace of the old life may be left in me. Only thus I shall realise the truth of my being, for my identification with Thee is the real truth, and my separation from Thee is a falsehood which is the root of all misery and trouble.

In seeking this re-union with Thee, Mother, it is not sufficient that we physically touch Thy feet or occasionally sit in meditation—we must give up all preoccupations and associate with Thee in all Thy work, in all Thy movements. Our life is still full of old ideas and thoughts, of old interests and associations, of old habits and tendencies, and these constitute a great obstacle to our union with Thee, Mother. We must turn away from these and identify ourselves with the great work Thou art accomplishing—the work of manifesting the Supra-mental Truth on earth ; we should turn all our attention to the creation of conditions favourable to this manifestation and to the removal of all obstacles.

And in all our thoughts and feelings and works, we should seek direct inner touch and inspiration from Thee, Mother. Thus united with Thee within ourselves, as the source of all light and strength and joy, and united with Thee outside in the great work that Thou hast undertaken, we

shall complete our identification with Thee, and really become a part and parcel of Thy own divine Self.

### III

It is not that our Sadhana (spiritual practice) will bear fruit only in some distant date in the future ; it is fulfilling itself every moment and is a course of progressive self-realisation. Even a little of it delivers us from great sorrow and sin, every step brings new joy, new life.

Our very resolution to turn away from the lower things in life and to realise the Divine, brings forth all that is best in us. By holding firmly to our faith, we are delivered from the torments of doubt and uncertainty. By aspiration we easily conquer the forces which would pull us down. By giving up desires we strike at the root of all misery and sin. By getting rid of egoism, we rise above the conflicts of the world and realise the unity and harmony of the higher life. By surrender to Thee, Mother, we are relieved from the great burden of life, and taste true freedom and peace. Sincere self-giving and devotion to Thee bring such a joy as has no parallel in the lower life of the senses.

The more we advance in Sadhana, the more we grow in purity and peace, in light and harmony, in power and joy ; every step we take brings its own reward ; even a little of it delivers us from great sorrow and sin. Thus we advance to the glories of the Life Divine.

### IV

The true test of our aspiration is that we must dissociate ourselves completely from the ordinary ways and modes of mankind ; we must not look with a longing on the life we

have consciously and deliberately left behind.

Men run wildly after transient joys and find an intense interest in the feverish pursuit of sense-desires ; these little, imperfect, conditional satisfactions are not for us. We are to look forward to the infinite and absolute delight of the Spirit in itself. Bound to their egoism, men are torn by the greed of possession, by ambition, jealousy, rivalry, vanity, arrogance ; they live in constant conflict and discord ; this poor, miserable life is not for us, we look up to the higher life in the unity and harmony of the all-pervading, all-embracing Divine.

Men work blind, restless, aimless like the rocking thundering waves in the sea, impelled by the hidden forces of their own desires ; moving round and round their own ego, ignorantly they think that they are making progress ; this is a sheer waste of time and energy from our point of view. We should seek the perfect skill in work in complete union with the Divine Mother.

Men are satisfied with limited power, limited joy, limited light, limited life. We seek Immortality and infinite power and joy ; we aspire to be identified with the Truth, and make it the very stuff of our life. We seek to exceed humanity and become Supermen ; we must resolutely turn our back on the ways and modes of mortal life on earth.

Yoga is not merely thinking of Thee, Mother, with the mind, or lowering the head at Thy feet ; these are certainly great aids and powerful starting points, but in themselves they cannot take us very far. We must fill our whole being with Thy living Presence, we must constantly



live in active and integral union with Thee—that will be Yoga in the real sense of the term.

There is no movement in us, conscious or unconscious, voluntary or involuntary, that has not some support, even conscious support, in some part of our being. We must constantly seek Thy light, vigilantly find out the false movements in us, resolutely withdraw all our support from them and sincerely call in Thy force to throw them away,— that will be a real process of *Yogic Sadhana*.

Then we must know Thy will in the world and sincerely devote ourselves to Thy service, always seeking inspiration and guidance from Thyself. We must keep ourselves full of the purest joy that rises from sincere love and devotion to Thee ; the Gods will come down from above to taste that divine joy in us and help us to grow in divine life—that is the process of Yoga which will surely give us the highest *siddhi* (spiritual achievement).

## TEACHINGS OF FRAY DIEGO ESTELLA

*By Wolfram H. Koch.*

[Mr. Koch is of German nationality. He is a staunch supporter of the Vedanta movement in Europe. India has known much about Christianity as preached by the different churches, but little of it as lived and interpreted by its saints and mystics. In the present study and others to be published in future, the reader will get a glimpse of a little known but valuable and fascinating aspect of Christian spiritual traditions. The life and message of these saintly mystics only go to prove the great Vedantic truth that all religions in their essence stand for the same God and the same spiritual ideal.]

**D**IEGO de San Cristobal (1524-1578) was born in the Navarran town of Estella. Even as a student he felt the utter hollowness and senselessness of what he called the "Vanity of the World". More than anything else he was convinced of the utter futility of the restless pursuit of sense-enjoyment and worldly pleasure, which only led man in a demoniacal dance without bringing him any real happiness or satisfaction, and without giving him any peace of mind. He became a monk in the monastery of San Francisco of Salamanca, adopting the name of his birthplace so as to be less known to the outside world, and to hide his aristocratic name under the more inconspicuous one of that

small town. He was one of the foremost scholars of his country in the 16th Century. His dispassion for the world was so great and deep that one more bitter disappointment was in store for him. For his life in the monastery brought him periods of acute misery and persecutions because of the sincerity of his character, so that later he clearly recognised that even such a life was but a part of that vanity and falseness of the world which he wished to renounce and to gibe. He died in the monastery of Salamanca on the 1st of August 1578.

His two outstanding works are the "Tratado de la vanidad del mundo" (Treatise on the Vanity of the World) and the "Meditaciones

devotisimas del amor de dios" (Meditations on the Love of God), some teachings of which will be given below. Both works were in great vogue in his country and abroad in the 16th and 17th Centuries, preference being given to the Treatise on the "Vanity of the World" in spite of the many repetitions and a certain didactic ardency which makes itself felt in many a passage. In the *Meditations on the Love of God* there is less of the schoolmaster, and more of the devotee of the Divine wishing to give his all to, and for, the Divine only, and ardently aspiring to the highest and closest communion with Him.

\* \* \*

#### CONTEMPLATION

"Contemplation which consists in the working of the intellect is the way and means to perfection, but it is not perfection itself. For perfection consists in lifting our will up to God through Divine Union and Supreme Love. Many philosophers were deceived by mistaking perfection to consist in sure speculative contemplation in which the subtlety of the intellect plays a greater part than the fervour of love. Thus they did not attain the end of true perfection, because they sought the contemplation of the Highest Good, which is God, for its own sake, and not for the sake of another perfection. But when contemplation is sought, not for the sake of contemplation, but out of love for the contemplated, so that he who contemplates may be kindled with the love of God whom he contemplates,—then it is not purely speculative, for then love is more at work than the intellect. In that true contemplation, which the servant of God should have of Divine

things, there is fervent and acute love; for he who loves is not contented with the exterior of that which he loves, but desires, in so far as this is possible, to penetrate into the interior of him whom he loves. While knowledge remains outside its object, love enters straight into it. Thus when contemplation is barren of love and is sought only for the sake of knowledge, it is dry, cold and imperfect, and leaves the contemplator without any feeling of satiation or bliss. The sweetness of contemplation therefore lies not in the purely speculative aspect of thought but in love, because the soul derives its food not from the intellect but from love, even as man experiences the delight of sweet taste not in the preparation of the meal but in eating what has been prepared."

"Beat thy wings, lifting up thy heart amidst the sacred meditations, if thou desirest to be renewed and converted from ashes and worms, knowing thy littleness before that immense, infinite Goodness of God. If thou wishest to pray with sweetness and to be comforted in thy contemplations, mix the forces of thy will, raising it and lifting it up to God, for thus dost thou attain, and deserve to attain, the fruit of contemplation. The sweet taste and delight of prayer consists in love, for the will is that which gives food to the soul. There are some who only exercise themselves in their intellectual part and not in the affective part of the will, and their goal is not to burn in fervent love, but to attain an inquisitive knowledge of God."

#### PURITY

"Before God showed Ezekiel what he had to tell the children of Amon,

he killed his wife, who, when dead, was lifted up to hear the secrets of God, for before she was held back and caught by the attachments of carnal love. Just as sensual sin darkens the intellect, dulls our judgment and paralyses reason, the purity of chastity disposes the soul in such a way as to make it fit to receive a clearer knowledge of God, and makes it capable of understanding the heavenly secrets. Of the apostles, only Saint John and Saint Paul had preserved their virginity, of whom the one was transported into the third heaven and beheld the Divine Essence, and the other was shown the heavenly secrets in the bosom of the Lord."

"Being gifted with this special privilege of chastity, the apostles, Saint John and Saint Paul were more subtle, and had a higher knowledge of Divine things, which can be gleaned from their writings. Saint Thomas of Aquinas, endowed with this virtue, shone in the Church because of his wonderful wisdom. Only he who is free from all earthly cares can contemplate the heavenly secrets. Chastity subjects sensuality to reason, thus disposing the soul to commune and converse with her spouse, Jesus Christ."

"Of God who is most pure and most clean, the Scripture says that He pastures among the lilies, because He delights in the white purity of chastity. Everything delights in its equal. Purity in the reasonable creature is very pleasing to God, for in it the Lord finds His delight and rest. It is written : No unclean thing shall enter the celestial city. And to chastity the spiritual beauty of the soul is principally attributed, for it constitutes a consonance and a pro-

portion, subjecting the flesh to the spirit."

"Chastity is born and preserved only in the asperity of life and the mortification of the flesh. Among delights chastity runs great risk, and without fasting and moderation it perishes. Strengthened by these two, however, it lives and maintains itself. To be chaste without being abstinent is a greater miracle than to resuscitate the dead. Lot, who lost abstinence, immediately lost chastity after it."

"He who is chaste is the friend of God and the companion of the angels. The humble and chaste person vanquishes the evil demons who are proud and unclean spirits. It is a greater thing to lead a chaste life while living in the flesh than to be an angel. If the angels could know envy, they would feel it only with respect to virginal men. That is why the angel did not consent to be adored by Saint John, the Evangelist, for he was virginal."

"Just as fire and water cannot remain together, so the spiritual consolations are not compatible with sensual vice. Moses ordered all women to be killed, except the virgins, on whom he had compassion while he had all the others slain by the sword. Chastity freed the virgins from death, and chastity shall free thee from Death Eternal."

"The Spirit of the Lord does not dwell in unclean bodies, but only in chaste and pure men. Chastity is a glorious and angelic virtue. Fortunate is that soul which serves in a pure body its Spouse, Jesus Christ ; fortunate indeed is he who prepares in his heart a pure chamber for the Holy Ghost ; fortunate he who, cleaning the temple of the Holy Ghost,

gives It a dwelling place in his soul. Flee from the pestilence of sensual vice, so that thy soul may be an honest and loyal spouse of Jesus Christ."

#### CONTROL OF ANGER

"Hate is inveterate anger. Just as vinegar corrupts the vessel in which it is kept if it remains in it for long, so hate which can be compared with boiled anger destroys the heart. Therefore the Apostle says that one should not let the sun go down on one's wrath, neither should we go to bed with anger in our heart, so that it may not become venomous hate, eating up our entrails, destroying charity and making the son of God, who is man, a slave and servant of the Evil Spirit. Peace is the palace of God, and in the peaceful heart dwells the Holy Ghost. Just as smoke drives a man out of the house, anger drives the Holy Ghost out of the soul. God speaks through Isaiah: 'On whom will My spirit take rest if not on the humble and calm one who keeps My words?' On the contrary, when the heart is angry, it turns into the habitation and dwelling-place of the Evil Spirit, for there is no vice making the Evil Spirit so much lord and master of man as anger, for the angry man does not doubt to execute all that the Evil Spirit commands, however great a sin it be."

"Following the advice of the Apostle, thou shouldst drive anger out of thy heart before it burns down the whole house. He who possesses a wooden house and lays fire to it, burns it down in an instant, and anger is like the fire with which the impatient man burns his entrails in no time. The fire, says the Scripture,

hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness, and the flame hath burned all the trees of the field."

#### PRACTICE OF PATIENCE

"An excellent manner of possessing is to possess not houses, towns or kingdoms, but, what is more, to possess oneself by virtue of patience. The impatient man loses himself and is not master of himself. Accordingly Job says, 'Why dost thou lose thy soul in thy fury?' He who has patience is master of himself, and the impatient man is ruled by his anger and his passions and his hate, which keep reason blind. Solomon says: 'Better is the patient man than the strong man, and he who becomes a master of his mind is better than he who fights against towns.' This mastery can be seen in patience, for it curbs the illicit appetite for vengeance of the inner man, and outwardly keeps the tongue from uttering insults and the hands from violence and force. Therefore the Lord says that the patient man possesses his soul. In him who is impatient, the anger and fury which possesses him become masters."

"Just as in battle arms are needed, so in this world, full as it is of temptation and enemies, we are in need of patience. That is why the Apostle admonishes us, saying, 'Let us run in patience to the battle awaiting us.'"

"He who wishes to conquer the vices should learn to suffer with patience the troubles that purify the soul. The Apostle says to the Hebrews: 'For ye have need of patience.' Him who possesses true patience, the whole world cannot vanquish. With the lashes he becomes strong as the bear, and he lives like the Salamander in the fire of tribulation."

### DIVINE LOVE

All the above passages are taken from the "Tratado de la vanidad del mundo" (Treatise on the Vanity of the World). We shall conclude by quoting some extracts from the "Meditaciones devotissimas del amor de Dios" (Meditations on the Love of God).

"We do not hold Thy Divine Love so much in our hands, O Lord, that we can at once rise to it ; we can do so only step by step, though, if our nature were not so perverted, our love would really have taken its origin from above. But being corrupted and damaged by sin, it lost its spiritual glow and took another new origin. It is like a spring which wells from its source, abundant and limpid, but gets closed with stones and wood and mud, and therefore seeks another way out. The spring, which at first welled up clear, now flows turbid and dirty, the original nature of its waters having become corrupted by the obstructions. Such is the case with the spring of love too, because it has found another origin that makes it turbid, evil-smelling, corrupt and muddy ; for now we begin by loving ourselves, just as we should have begun by loving God, because to speak the truth, this would have been more natural. The nature of love having become perverted once, love, too, changed its origin, so that just as we should first have loved Thee, our Lord and God, for Thine own love's sake, and all things for Thee and in Thee, we now begin by loving ourselves more than anybody else ; and all else that we love, we love for our own sake. That

is how we begin to love Thee from motives of profit, putting the foundation and beginning in ourselves and seeking Thee not so much for Thine own sake as from thoughts of self-interest ; for we know that we cannot exist without Thee, and the continual need which we feel for Thy Divine Majesty compels and forces us to seek Thee as our helper and to call upon Thee, so that Thou mayest favour us and give us all that is necessary for our life. Hence it is that, as without Thee we cannot possess what we love, we love Thee for our own sake, being forced to do so, as there is no other course left open to us. And as we continue to love Thee, we experience and come to know in ourselves Thy benignity and Thy liberality, benevolence, suavity and goodness, with many other Divine perfections. Thus it is brought about that, gradually forgetting ourselves, we begin to love Thee for Thy goodness—Thee whom we sought before as something useful and profitable. This is the third degree of love ; for the first is when we love ourselves, the second when we love Thee for our own sake, and the third degree of love is when we love Thee and ourselves and all things only for Thine own sake. Rising through these degrees of love, we attain Heaven where the imperfection of our love becomes refined, purified and attenuated till it reaches the summit and height of true love, where we love Thee only for that which Thou art and as being most worthy of love, without any consideration of ourselves ; for Thou art the Highest Good and Infinite Goodness."

## SWETASWATARA UPANISHAD

*By Swami Thyagisananda*

वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ।

तमेव विदित्वाऽतिमृत्युमेति नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय ॥

तमसः परस्तात्= beyond darkness आदित्यवर्णं= effulgent like the sun  
एतं= this महान्तं= great पुरुषं= Self अहं= I वेद= have realised तमेव= Him  
alone विदित्वा= realising अतिमृत्युं= beyond death एति= goes अयनाय= for  
thus passing अन्यः= another पन्थाः= way न विद्यते= there is not

I <sup>1</sup> have realised this great Self who shines effulgent like the sun beyond all <sup>2</sup> darkness. One passes beyond death only on realising that. There is no other way of escape from Samsara.

(8)

*Note.*—1. Rishi Swetaswatara.

2. *Darkness.*—Stands for ignorance which is the cause of Samsara.

यस्मात्परं नापरमस्ति किञ्चिद्यस्मान्नाणीयो न ज्यायोऽस्ति कश्चित् ।

वृक्ष इव स्तब्धो दिवितिष्ठत्येकस्तेनेदं पूर्णं पुरुषेण सर्वम् ॥

यस्मात्= than whom परं= higher अपरं= different किञ्चित्= anything  
नास्ति= there is not यस्मात्= than whom अणीयः= more minute ज्यायः=  
greater or older in age कश्चित्= any one नास्ति= there is not वृक्ष इव=  
like a tree स्तब्धः= immovable दिवि= in his own glory तिष्ठति= stands  
एकः= alone तेन पुरुषेण= by that self इदं सर्वं= the whole of this पूर्णं= is filled

There is naught higher than or different from that : naught greater or more minute than that. He stands, one without a second, immovable, like a tree rooted in His own glory. By this Self the whole universe is filled. (9)

ततो यदुत्तरतरं तदरूपमनामयम् ।

य एतद्विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति अथेतरे दुःखमेवापियन्ति ॥

यत्= which ततः= than that उत्तरतरं= far higher तत्= that अरूपं=  
formless अनामयं= free from misery ये= who एतत्= this विदुः= know ते=  
they अमृताः= immortal भवन्ति= become अथ= but इतरे= others दुःखं=  
misery एव= alone अपियन्ति= suffer.

That Being is <sup>1</sup> far beyond this world, is formless and free from misery. They who know this become immortal. But all others have indeed to suffer misery alone. (10)

*Note.*—1. *Far beyond.*—The Absolute cannot by any stretch of imagination be brought into relation with the world, as all conception of relation based on space, time and causation is within the realm of Maya.

सर्वाननशिरोग्रीवः सर्वभूतगुहाशयः ।

सर्वव्यापी स भगवांस्तस्मात्सर्वगतः शिवः ॥

तस्मात् = therefore सः = that भगवान् = Divine Lord सर्वव्यापी = pervading everything सर्वगतः = omnipresent शिवः = benevolent सन् = being सर्वाननशिरोग्रीवः = making use of all faces, heads and necks सर्वभूतगुहाशयः = dwells in the hearts of all beings.

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, that Divine Lord, being all-pervading, omnipresent and <sup>2</sup> benevolent, dwells in the hearts of all beings, and <sup>3</sup> makes use of all faces, heads and necks in this world. (11)

*Notes.*—It is noteworthy that this Mantra, speaking of divine immanence, comes immediately after the previous which depicts the Supreme as the 'Absolute, far beyond all relations. The idea is that God is both transcendent and immanent.

1. *Therefore.*—Because He is formless, all pervading, etc., He can take any form and be present anywhere and everywhere according to the wish of the devotee.

2. *Benevolent.*—If He did not graciously dwell in the heart of all beings, and guide their senses, thoughts and actions, it would not have been possible for man to realise Him, by his own unaided effort.

3. *Makes use of, etc.*—To save their souls.

महान् प्रभुवै पुरुषः सत्वस्थैष प्रवर्तकः ।

सुनिर्मलाभिमां प्राप्तिमीशानो ज्योतिरव्ययः ॥

पुरुषः = this Self महान् प्रभुः = the mighty Lord वै = indeed एषः = He सुनिर्मलां = extremely pure इमां = this प्राप्ति = attainment (उद्दिश्य = for securing) सत्वस्थ = of the intellect of being प्रवर्तकः = guide ईशानः = controller अव्ययः = imperishable ज्योतिः = light

This Self is indeed the mighty Lord. He is the imperishable (internal) Light that controls everything. He guides the intellect of all beings so as to enable them to gain that extremely pure state (of Mukti). (12)

अंगुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषोऽन्तरात्मा सदा जनानां हृदये संनिविष्टः ।

हृदा मनीषा मनसाभिकल्पो य एतद्विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥

हृदा = by the heart or feeling मनीषा = by the Buddhi or intellect मनसा = by the imagination and will अभिकल्पः = limited in size अंगुष्ठमात्रः = being of the size of a thumb अन्तरात्मा = the inner Self पुरुषः = Infinite Being सदा = always जनानां = of creatures हृदये = in the heart संनिविष्टः = dwells ये = who एतन् = this विदुः = know ते = they अमृताः = immortal भवन्ति = become

Assuming a form of the <sup>1</sup> size of a thumb, by virtue of intellect, emotion, imagination and will, the Infinite Being dwells

in the hearts of creatures as their inner self. They who realise Him become immortal. (13)

*Note.*—<sup>1</sup> *Size of a thumb.*—Denotes the size of the heart where the self is to be meditated upon and realised. The Self is not really reduced to a limited size but only appears to be so.

सहस्रशीर्षा पुरुषः सहस्राक्षः सहस्रपात् ।

स भूमिं विश्वतो वृत्वा अत्यतिष्ठद्दशाङ्गुलम् ॥

पुरुषः—the Infinite Being सहस्रशीर्षा=has a thousand heads सहस्राक्षः=has a thousand eyes सहस्रपात्=has a thousand feet सः=He भूमिं=the universe विश्वतो=on all sides वृत्वा=having enveloped दशाङ्गुलम्=ten fingers अत्यतिष्ठद्=extends beyond (by)

That Infinite Being has a <sup>1</sup> thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand feet enveloping the whole universe on all sides. He exists beyond <sup>2</sup> ten fingers. (14)

*Note.*—1. *A thousand heads, etc.*—The reference to thousand heads, eyes, and feet indicates that He is the real thinker, witness and worker behind individual brains, eyes and organs of action, respectively.

2. *Ten fingers.*—The expression has several interpretations. We give here two of them which seem best. (a) He exists in the heart which is ten fingers beyond, i.e., above the navel. The idea is that though He, the manifestor of the cosmos is so great, yet He is immanent in all, and resides in the heart, i.e., the self of man. (b) Though He has manifested Himself as the cosmos, he exists beyond it by ten fingers, i.e., transcends it. Thus in the first part of the Mantra, divine immanence is emphasised, and in the second, divine transcendence.

## NEWS AND VIEWS

### Rights of Women

Mrs. Margaret Cousins, in her presidential speech at the All-India Women's Conference, points out :

"All women's struggle for reforms, when analysed, are our expressions of revolt against a double standard . . . . There is a double standard in morality, in wages, in education, in citizenship, in opportunity for work and service, in religion . . . Without economic rights in the home, women will continue to be the suppressed sex, dependent on the generosity, patronage and sentimentality of the artificially made superior sex, and she cannot have self-respect or self-reliance, but imbibe an inferiority complex, thinking also that her great hard work of mothering and caring for the race is her curse instead of her worthy vocation."

Mrs. Cousins laments that while India spends only 8 crores of rupees for 350 millions of people on elementary education, Britain spends 86 crores of rupees for only 40 million people, and U. S. A., 247 crores for 130 millions. Even of this meagre amount spent in India, 14 times more is spent on boys' education. Among girls only 1 per cent gets elementary education, and .001 per cent, secondary education.

### Indian Philosophy and Competitive Examinations

Resolutions have been passed in the Indian Philosophical Congress re-



questing the authorities that Indian Philosophy should be given back the place it enjoyed among the subjects previously permitted for the I. C. S. Examination. The exclusion of this profound subject from Indian Audit and Account as well as Indian Police Service examinations was also noted, and representation on these resolutions is to be made to the authorities.

### **Need of Hindu Missionaries**

In a lecture to a large audience at Kuala Lumpur on 22nd December, Rt. Hon'ble Mr. Srinivasa Sastri advised the Indian Community in Malaya to remain affiliated to the motherland in their civilisation, religion and culture, and to identify themselves with the honour and fortunes of the land of their adoption in the completest sense of the word. In the matter of removing their handicap (due to their isolation at a great distance from the motherland) in respect of practising Indian customs and habits in an altogether uncongenial surrounding, Mr. Sastri opined that a duty lay upon the people of India. He said :

"It is our duty to send out every now and then a true missionary of Hindu culture and civilization, persons who bring knowledge and understanding of our scriptures, the practice of our rituals and ceremonials at their purest. We want to maintain a body of Missionaries whose business it will be to keep you, geographically different, in continual and living touch with the ancient civilisation..... I will not say it is foreign to our nature, for I cannot be treasonable to our own high character and accuse us failing in this fundamental duty. Surely, there is no harm in attempting that which we have so far failed to realise—that we have duties in this respect to our people abroad."

### **The Future of Civilisation**

Viewing the affairs of the world from the position of the Philippine

Islands, Walter Brooks Foley writes in the *Indian Social Reformer* :

"More and more it becomes evident that the hope of any advancing civilisation lies in the hands of three countries—China, India and United States. And if one of these shall base its international policy on military might, it will drop out of its high place of vital responsible leadership. My personal desire for India is that she may follow the basic moral and ethical leadership of Gandhiji, following the path of non-violence and national sacrifice he has urged and exemplified.... Internal disunion is all that can keep India from her high destiny in the future history of the world. ....May I suggest the possibility of Indian visitors coming to the Philippines? Centuries ago Indians came in fairly large numbers, and they left their imprint on the racial strains here and on the language as well. Perhaps it is time to repeat the rapprochement."

### **"What could they know of India who only India knows?"**

Speaking about the architecture and art in Angkor in Cambodia, Mr. Jinarajadasa, who had been to Indo-China some months back, points out :

"The Hindu colonisation began about the first century, and was led by the Brahmin Kaundinya, who settled in the lower part of the River Mekong, and founded the Kingdom of Fonnán. In the fourth century a second colony was founded further north by Kambu, and his descendants were called Kambujas, whence came the name Kamboja. The history of the colonisation was gathered from Sanskrit inscriptions covering a period of four centuries."

About the architecture, the ruins of which still attract tourists, the speaker said :

"There were two main groups of architectural monuments in Cambodia; the first, of the temple of Angkor and the second, the monuments in the city near by Angkor Thom. Angkor Vat was impressive not only because of its size, but particularly because of the conception of the architect who diverted the river and made a water causeway with an enclosure which was

nearly a square. Its length west to east was seven furlongs and north to south six. The width of the water causeway was just over one furlong. Then began the first temple wall in an enclosure whose length was five furlongs and breadth four furlongs. The temple consisted of several courtyards, each at a higher level. The area covered was about double that of the temple in Madura. The central tower was slightly less high than the height of the largest Gopuram in Madura, but its base was at a height of over 150 feet. It had four attendant towers. The square colonnade enclosure at the first level was nearly a mile on its four sides, and its wall was full of carvings, depicting incidents from the Mahabharata, Ramayana and the Puranas. The material of the temple was sandstone, which enabled finer sculpture than was possible in granite. The city of Angkor Thom contributed a new variety of architecture."

### **Sexcentenary of the Vijayanagar Empire**

The memory of the "forgotten empire," so vigorously revived by the recent celebration at Hampi, is peculiarly significant to-day when the consolidation of our national energies and reconstruction of sociological ideas are keenly occupying the best minds of the country. The religious and political ideals that inspired this Empire were characteristically Hindu in conception, and there is therefore a special importance in the revival of their memory at the present time when we stand in need of a new urge for the unification of Indian culture. The reign of Krishnadevaraya, which formed the Periclean age of this Empire, is one of which any Indian could legitimately be proud of. In the words of Dr. Krishna :

"One of the chief objects of Vijayanagar was to defend Dharma or religion. To the Turkish onslaught against Hinduism in other parts of India and the intolerance shown towards the faith of the idolator, Vijayanagar gave a fitting and dignified

reply. Except for lapses for short periods on very rare occasions, the Empire adopted a policy of sympathetic tolerance and even encouragements of all creeds, whatever might have been the personal inclinations of the rulers or their ministers. The earlier kings appear to have been disciples of the Smarthas for about three or four generations, and from the time of Devaraya II there was much Vira Saiva influence at the court. From the period of usurpations, the royal families were mostly disciples of the Srivaishnavas. During the greatness of the Empire under Krishnadevaraya, the Madwa monks wielded considerable influence. But almost throughout her history the Empire followed a policy which was adopted at the foundation and openly declared in an inscription of Bukkaraya at Sravanabelgola where he states in a dispute between the Vaishnavas and the Jains that no difference is to be made between the two sects, that even their essential teachings are the same, that the adversity or prosperity of the one is the adversity or prosperity of the other and that people of different sects should co-operate and help each other in the pursuit of their own religious practices. The names of religious men of the period among the Smartas were men like Vidyatirtha, Vidyaranya, and Ramachandra Bharati. The Madhwas were led by Akshobhya, Vyasa-raya and Vadiraja. The Srivaishnava leaders were Manavala Mahamuni, Sudarasanacharya, Doddarayacharya, Tolappalacharya and Lakshmikumar Tatacharya. Equally great men like Nagideva, Tontadarya, Gosala, Chenna Basava and Nijagunasiva Yogi appeared among the Vira Saivas. The Jains had their Nemichandra and others. They and the Muslims, though small in number, were fully protected by the State and numerous Bastis and Musjids were constructed during the time. However serious might have been the differences of opinion among the philosophers, the religion of the people at large appears to have been not only one of friendship and tolerance but even one of universal acceptance."

### **Population trends in the East and the West**

Addressing the Rotary Club luncheon meeting, Accountant-Gen-

ral Mr. P. K. Wattal said that the framing of a sound population policy was an urgent necessity for every country and he hoped that the new autonomous Governments that would be established in the provinces would direct their energies to it with the same thoroughness and vigour shown by some Governments in the West. The facts revealed by the learned lecturer are instructive and thought-provoking. He said :

"The population of the world is about 2,000 millions, of which the European people constitute one-third, and the non-European the remaining two-thirds. The rate of growth of the European races was very rapid during the 19th century. They formed one-fifth of the world's population in 1800, and now constitute one-third. The non-European peoples constituted four-fifths of the world's population in 1800, and now constitute only two-thirds. The population of England and Wales was about 9 millions in 1801. To-day it is nearly 41 millions.... An Englishman on an average lives twice as long as an Indian."

He further invited attention to the following special feature in the changes in population in Northern India :

"You find a large Muslim population in the North-West Frontier Provinces, a steadily diminishing proportion of Muslims in the Punjab, a still less proportion in the U. P., even less in Behar, and then quite suddenly a large proportion of Muslims in Bengal .... The large proportion of Muslims in Bengal is due to purely natural causes and has occurred within a comparatively short period of British rule... The rate of increase of the Muslim population in Bengal for the last 50 years has been one per cent per annum and that of the Hindus less than half of that .... The Provincial Census Superintendent thinks that the Hindus of Bengal are approaching their maximum, and will soon show an actual decline in population, while the Muslim population will continue to grow."

### **The Ideal for the Indian Student**

Mr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, concluded his powerful address delivered to nearly ten thousand students in connection with the University Day, with these words :

"If Bengal is again to play her part in the re-making of India, she must produce through her educational institutions a race of men strong in body and mind, true, resolute and self-reliant, burning with lofty patriotism and idealism, not carried away by emotions but capable of exercising critical and reasonable judgment, trained to be leaders and soldiers, amenable to discipline—discipline imposed by the combined will of themselves—devoted to duty and determined to work not as a class or community but in the spirit of corporate service ever willing to place their services in all capacities for the good of society and for the advancement of the highest interests of the nation."

Memorable words worthy to be remembered by not only Bengal but other provinces too if they also are to play their part in the re-making of India.

### **A great Sanatanist supports Temple Entry Proclamation**

Regarding the much acclaimed and criticised temple-entry Proclamation of Travancore State, Professor Sundarramaier of Kumbhakonam said, in an exclusive interview given to *The Hindu*, that he did not believe either that mere birth as such could be a source of pollution to any human being, or that there is a fifth caste—so-called polluted classes—as a permanent section of the Hindu social system. He stated :

"Though I have always lived an orthodox Brahmin's life, I have never been wedded irrevocably to the idea that the ideals on which the present Brahmanical life has been based form a part of the eternal order of the Universe. When, as

human necessities arise and dictate to us prudent and safe steps towards progress to a higher collective or unified life, free from mere superstition or meaningless custom, I have always been ready to join in every kind of activity to achieve such a purpose. When it (the temple-entry proclamation) is fully carried out, it will be found to be most beneficial to the Hindus and will certainly place them and their religion on a higher scale of civilisation. Any religion worth the name cannot and ought not to stand in the way of the evolution and progress of human welfare and culture. The Agama Sastras, however useful for the maintenance of social order, can never act in such a way as to prevent our adjustments in accordance with the precepts and injunctions of the Vedas, direct and implied . . . . The Vedas are unalterable and inviolable, but not so the Agamas . . . . Further it is absurd to hold that all the so-called Depressed Classes in India to-day should be labelled as 'Chandalas' and hence excluded from the benefit of a higher social and religious life of association with those who now enjoy a higher social status . . . . Those who have status and influence in Hindu society must avail themselves of every opportunity to set an example and thus pave the way for those who are in favour of rapid reform . . . . The elevation of the Depressed Classes must be achieved without involving the sudden dislocation or depression of the higher classes of Hindu society."

The venerable Professor, than whom the Bharata Dharma says there is "no better Sanatanist or more orthodox Brahmin," favours a permissive legislation to facilitate temple-entry for Harijans in British India. According to him :

" . . . . if any body of trustees or owners of temples resolve to throw open the temple or temples under their management to the Depressed Classes now excluded therefrom, they must have entire discretion to do so, and the laws of the land must be so amended as not to fetter their discretion . . . . Why then should we not boldly come forward to extend such rights of temples, now denied to Harijans who still remain within the pale of Hinduism?"

### Sanitary Mindedness

The Gods are clean and they desire cleanliness (Suchi kama hi devah suchayascha)—this is a saying from our scriptures. But in spite of all religiosity in India, innumerable slovenly habits and extremely insanitary practices permeate from the top to the bottom of society, and they stand in immediate need of rectification by the combined efforts of all. In a recent speech, rightly has Lt.-Col. C. M. Ganapathi, Director of Public Health, pointed out :

"It is amazing that while politics have always been kept in the foremost, the social and sanitary aspects have not received equal attention."

He was of opinion that the instinct of cleanliness inborn in every one, but the desire to let it develop differed according to people's circumstances in life. He said :

"There could be no justification for a person who was well placed in life not adopting the ordinary elementary ideas of sanitation ; but when they came to less fortunately circumstanced people, it made them think why they were careless about following the ordinary rules of health. There could be no doubt that the drab and dreary existence one found in slums made one lose all interest in the ordinary decencies of life. It was the duty, therefore, of the authorities concerned to find ways and means for re-establishing those interests in life without which one was bound to be reduced to the level of an animal."

Lt.-Col. Ganapathi was strongly of opinion that

"the mere clearance of some slums and the provision of better housing conditions with sanitary conditions and with sanitary conveniences would not solve our public health problems but it was the change in outlook which should be first established before costly schemes were undertaken. The change of outlook could only be brought about by heavy bombardment in the shape of intensive and continuous propaganda."

No thoughtful man could disagree on these points. Could there be a more opportune time, we ask, for this "bombardment" than the present when the 'screen' and the 'radio' and the press are universal features of publicity? Why not then the Government and the country awake?

Mr. Ganapathi makes the following touching appeal:

"The cultivation of sanitary habits must first begin at home. I am not one of

those who believe that a knowledge of the three R's is absolutely essential for the observance of elementary sanitation. It is one of the tragedies of this country that there is not a single river or a collection of water, unless protected, which is not fouled by the inhabitants in spite of the fact that every river has some religious significance attached to it. Our forefathers must have anticipated the habits and character of their descendants when they enjoined that water should be treated as something sacred."

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**Brahma-Sutras :** By Swami Vireswarananda. Published by the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas. Copies can be had also at Ramakrishna Math, Myslapore, Madras. Price Rs. 3. Pp. 542+LXIII.

The book under review contains the text of the Sutras, word-for-word and running translation in English, comments and a valuable Index and Introduction. The word-for-word translation is literal while the running translation is made as literal as possible consistent with easy reading. The notes deserve to be called something more than what they style themselves to be. They form in fact a very able abridgement of the whole commentary of Sri Sankara on the Vedanta Sutras, supplemented with the views of the later scholiasts who have written elaborate expositions on his commentary. While the complete translation of Sankara's commentary has got its own importance, an abridgement of it in English like the present book, embodying the Upanishadic passages discussed as well as sufficiently detailed summaries of all the discussions, has a great value, both to the general reader and the scholar, which cannot be obtained from the full translation. For very often the textual prepossession and the scholastic niceties of the original make at least a considerable portion of it so boring and dull to a modern mind that but for a rigid sense of duty, either religious or scholarly, it would gladly abandon the study of several sections, in spite of all the literary beauty of Sankara's style and the great

intellectual powers displayed even in textual discussions. Swami Vireswarananda's abridgement saves the reader, who is keen after the study of Hindu scriptures, from all such fear of intellectual ordeal, and provides him with the facilities for deriving the full benefit of the study of the commentary without the trials attendant on it. In fact we deem its importance in popularising the study of Sankara's commentary to be much greater than that of even the excellent complete translation of the original by Dr. Thibaut, whose exorbitant price of Rs. 20-10-0 makes it beyond the means of the average Indian reader. The discussions in their abridged form are so clear and pointed, and the English so simple, lucid and expressive, that there is no reason hereafter for any non-Sanskrit knowing student of Vedanta, who understands English, not to be equipped with a sound knowledge of Sankara's interpretation of the Vedanta Sutras.

The Introduction too is both wide in scope and deep in point of erudition. It is an able reply to Dr. Thibaut's contention that the Vedanta Sutras of Badarayana are in agreement only with the Visishtadvaita doctrine of Ramanuja, and do not in themselves convey the monistic sense which Sankara sees in them.

In the matter of get-up, the book sets a worthy example for emulation by all Indian publishers.

**Studies in Indian Education :** By H. N. Wanchoo, Inspector of Schools, Benares Division, U.P. Printed and published by

*M. N. Pandey at the Allahabad Law Journal Press, Allahabad. Price Rs. 3-8-0. Pages 200.*

The studies deal with a variety of problems in Indian Education, their diagnosis and their treatment. Modern Indian Education, till now, has had no well-defined aims, and has been making objectives serve the purpose of ideals. But to-day there is an awakening. It is with a conviction that this awakening is not the result of an evanescent enthusiasm but will be productive of far reaching changes, that the author approaches the problems and puts forth his suggestions.

First he examines the Rural Schools, next the Secondary Schools and lastly the University. Though most of his observations and conclusions relate to conditions obtaining in United Provinces, they are no less true with regard to other provinces and of India as a whole.

*The Rural School.* The objective of the Rural School should be to conserve and reconstruct the essentials of the rural upbringing of the pupils so that they may not subsequently find their life uprooted from their environment as they now do very often. The means of livelihood in a village are agriculture and subsidiary handicraft and this is the background that the Rural School must reflect in its organisation and work. From experiments actually conducted, the author has demonstrated the fact that with the existing organisation and little increase in expenditure, it is possible thus to ruralise our rural schools and improve their level of efficiency in physical and general instruction.

*The Secondary School.* The aim of the Secondary School should be to produce a new type of youth who will join to sanity and clarity of mind freedom from social and insular prejudices; who will possess manual efficiency and insight into the artistic; and who will have a right understanding of the moral and spiritual values of life. The overweighted curriculum, the examination system, the need for the co-ordination of general and industrial education, physical culture—these are some of the problems discussed.

*The University.* With regard to the University, the author feels the urgent

need to teach the youth the lesson of a rigorous simplicity of life. The Indian student has behind him a tradition of simple and abstemious living embodied in the doctrine of 'Brahmacharya', and it would not be difficult to revive an ideal which we have apparently forsaken. Next an omission of modern Universities in India and elsewhere, of which the author complains, is the entire lack of cultivation of the spirit of toleration. The failure of the Indian University to foster this ideal is attributed to its pre-occupation with trivial objectives and the absence of a well-planned purpose, and in the Western University, to the intensity and narrowness of nationalism. Lastly "the acid test of the worth of education is whether it has lighted the flame of a living faith in the ideal of service in the breast of youth, to be kept burning throughout life; if education fails in this, it fails in its prime purpose." In the concluding paragraphs the author points out that the prime duty of the Indian teacher is to make the Indian student nationally self-conscious, without in any way prejudicing his wider loyalty to humanity. The essence of India's heritage, summed up in the word 'spirituality', must be conserved.

*Freedom and Culture : By Sir S. Radhakrishnan. Published by G. A. Natesan & Co. Price Re. 1. Pp. 158.*

In these pages one finds a patient and calm discussion of vital contemporary issues, and a sincere attempt to put oneself in the place of the young and deal with understanding sympathy the struggle that is going on within their hearts in a period of storm and stress in their lives.

Both in the magnificent variety and in the fine idealism of its content, the reader of this little volume would find rich refreshment and unfailing inspiration. Whether it is nationalism or democracy, culture or educated unemployment, the communal dissensions or the place of science and of vernaculars in a scheme of instruction, Sir S. Radhakrishnan lifts the discussion to a very high calm and elevated plane.

Indeed, Radhakrishnan's concluding appeal in many of the addresses we cannot forbear from quoting. "We need a new

simplicity of life, a new asceticism," he says, "and you, my young friends, to whom leadership in thought and practice is passing, need it most. We have no glittering prizes of wealth or power or glory to offer to you but only hardships, struggle and suffering. May the ideals of the University help you to face them with spirit and courage and save you from cynicism and despair."

No more need be said in praise of this little volume than that both to the young and the old it will be a source of endless delight and ever fresh and unfailing inspiration and stimulus. This splendid little volume should find its place in every Indian Student's home.

**A Peep into the Spiritual Unconscious :**  
*By Zuhruddin Ahmad, M.A., LL.B., Principal, Bahauddin College, Junagadh. Copies to be had of the author.*

"The satisfaction of the material and social tendencies must be voluntarily minimised for the sake of developing the spiritual aspect of life. Progress of life implies suppression of material and social activities for the sake of preserving the same energy for being utilised for the purpose of spiritual ends," says the author of this book. Of the three modes of experience, *viz.*, senses, intellect and intuition, the last alone is the means of spiritual life. For, while intellect tends towards analysis and confusedness, intuition, by a clear perception of unity, synthesises the differing phases of experience. Hence he in whom intuition is most developed is the most spiritual. In such a person there will be reflected a unity and uniformity of conduct in all his thoughts, feelings, words, deeds and beliefs. These are some of the deeper thoughts that have helped the author in his attempt to study the phenomenon of dreams. From this high standpoint he discusses the defects and imperfections of Organic and Image theories, as also those of Suppressed Consciousness and Prevision. The psyche is but a finite form of Universal Consciousness which is eternal, and without the presence of both, dreams are impossible. There ought to be a science of dreams, and their phenomenon

in a sense connects our mind with eternity and gives us an indication of life after death. The psyche can have a glimpse at the Absolute only through intuition, for the Universal Consciousness of which the various experiences are but the particular forms is an indivisible unity. While discussing the psychology of dreams, the author does not lose hold of the metaphysical base. The book is well-written and has a good get-up. The summary, with an appendix of dreams and an index, serves to enhance the value of this publication.

**From the Master's Lips: By R. Krishnaswamy Iyer, M.A., B.L.** Copies can be had of Madras Law Journal Press. Price Rs. 1.

Within the bounds of two hundred pages, this book, written in the form of a series of discussions with His Holiness the Jagadguru of Sringeri Mutt, purports to give a real insight into the crux of religious, social, philosophical and educational problems of to-day. Arguments are throughout interesting and always end fruitfully. A book which every orthodox Hindu may read with benefit.

**Advaita Siddhantam : By S. Aiyadurai Iyer, B.A., Retired Sub-Magistrate and Superintendent, Rameswaram Devasthanam, Paramakudy, Ramnad Dt.** Price As. 8.

This pamphlet of eighty pages is an attempt to interpret the life of Lord Krishna and the teachings of the Mahabharata and the Gita from the standpoint of Yogasastra. This method of study, though not acceptable to all, certainly constrains the layman to justly value the epics with reference to higher esoteric canons of interpretation.

**Cross Roads : By Harindranath Chattopadhyaya. The Shama's Publishing House, Aghore Mandir, Mount Road, Madras. Pp. 43. (poems)**

The poems are intense and contain some gems of expression. The Dedicatory, which is the key-poem in the book, and the concluding poem are instinct with sincerity and power. They are in a sense the best in the collection. Some are heavy with a weight of gloom only less oppressive than the poet's present mood.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### Centenary Celebrations at Madras

The city of Madras celebrated the Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna on a grand scale for a week from the 21st to the 27th of February. The celebrations were not confined to one part of the city but arranged in such a way that one day was allotted to each part of the city. The different divisions of the city in which celebrations took place were: Mylapore, Vepery, Thiagarayanagar, Washermanpet, Sowcarpet, East George Town and Triplicane. In all these places the various items of celebration were: Bhajana, Puja, feeding of the poor, music or Harikatha, public meeting and procession. Well-known musicians of South India gave performances on these days, and the processions, in which a specially made statue of Sri Ramakrishna was taken round the different localities, were accompanied by a celebrated Nagaswaram party from the south. On each of these days about 2,000 Daridra-Narayanans were fed in the locality where the celebration was held for the day. At the Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, a tastefully decorated photograph of Sri Ramakrishna, with special arrangements for illumination, was kept in the main hall of the Math during the seven days of the celebration.

While the items described above formed the main devotional, artistic and humanistic aspects of the celebration, the public lectures in the evenings served to spread the ideas of Sri Ramakrishna. These lectures were delivered by eminent speakers, and large crowds listened to them. Of these public meetings, the first day's at Mylapore was addressed by Mr. M. R. Jayakar, M.A., Bar-at-Law. In an hour's speech he pointed out the special contributions of Sri Ramakrishna to the religious life of India, his uniqueness among the sages of this country, his message of the unity of religions, and the significance of his life and experiences in the building up of New India. The Hon'ble Justice Sir M. Venkatasubba Rao presided on the occasion. The second day's meeting at Vepery was presided over by the Hon'ble Sir K. V. Reddi Nayadu Garu, K.C.I.E., and Prof. A. R. Wadia of Mysore was the speaker in

English. Prof. Wadia spoke of the spirit of service which Sri Ramakrishna infused into the Indian ideal of Sannyas, and the president in his concluding remarks pointed out how the unique message of Sri Ramakrishna consisted in harmonising the personal and impersonal conceptions of God. The third day's function was presided over by His Excellency The Lord Erskine, G.C.I.E., the Governor of Madras, who laid on the same day the foundation stone for the Ramakrishna Mission High School building at Thiagarayanagar. The day's address was delivered by Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Aiyer, Kt. Among the other gentlemen who presided on the other days were Messrs C. Rajagopalachariar, V. V. Srinivasa Aiyangar, B.A., B.L., T. R. Venkatarama Sastriyar, C.I.E., and Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer, K.C.S.I., and among the other speakers were Dewan Bahadur K. S. Ramaswami Sastriyal, and Messrs. T. P. Meenakshisundaram Pillai, S. Satchidanandam Pillai and Ratnasabhapathi Mudaliar, besides three Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission. Every day, in addition to the lecture in English, there was one in Tamil too. All these various lectures, delivered during the celebration week, would together represent the diverse aspects of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teachings. The celebration on the whole helped to bring the name of Sri Ramakrishna and his message to thousands of people who had not either heard of him or were not acquainted well with his teachings.

### Centenary Celebration at Tanjore

The Religious Association, Tanjore, organised a week's celebration of the Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna, beginning from 4th January, 1937. The celebration was inaugurated by Swami Avinashananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, who pointed out that the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna attracted not only the followers of different sects of the Hindu fold but also the believers in other faiths of the world, and that one and all these felt quite at home under his banner. Swami Nisreyasananda also addressed the meeting on the message of Sri Ramakrishna to the modern world. Both the Swamis and seve-



ral others delivered lectures on subjects of religious importance on other days of the celebration also. On all the days of the week there were interesting programmes like Lectures, Bhajanas, Harikatha, Music, Vedic chanting and feeding of the poor. On the last day the portrait of Sri Ramakrishna was taken round in procession.

#### Sri Ramakrishna Centenary at Calcutta

*Procession* : A mile-long cosmopolitan procession, the like of which had not been witnessed in Calcutta within living memory, was taken out in connection with the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary celebrations.

People belonging to different faiths and religions participated in the procession and thousands lined the route along which it passed. Flowers and fried rice were showered on the big portrait of Ramakrishna carried in a motor-lorry headed by macebearers and yellow-robed Sikhs, Kirpans in head.

Portraits of prophets and seers of various religions and pictorial representations of the mottos of different faiths exhibited one after another in a long chain formed the unique feature of the procession. Batches of Sannyasins in ochre-coloured robes, disciplined bands of uniformed volunteers, numerous musical parties singing in praise of Sri Ramakrishna and blowing of scores of conch-shells at a time were other principal attractions. Mr. B. C. Chatterjee with other Hindu leaders led the procession. The meeting culminated in a mass meeting under the presidency of Hon. Mr. B. K. Basu, ex-Mayor of Calcutta.

In the course of a brief address Mr. B. K. Basu asked the people to be inspired with the noble ideals of Ramakrishna Mission, devoted to the service of the suffering humanity, irrespective of caste, creed or colour. Hindus, Mahomedans, Christians—all were equally treated by the Mission and he thought that they could most effectively combat the communal cancer if they imbibed the spirit that actuated the work of the Mission and emulated its example in their dealings with others.

*Exhibition* : One of the most interesting items of the concluding celebration of the Centenary, namely an Exhibition of Indian Arts, Culture and Industries, began on the 1st February at Northern Park, Bhawanipore, and continued for the whole of February. Sri Hari Sankar Paul, Mayor of Calcutta, who opened the Exhibition, congratulated the organisers on this splendid effort to display, in the cultural section of the Exhibition, the historic evolution of Indian culture from the time of Mohenjo Daro up to the present day and expressed the hope that the Exhibition hallowed by the memory of Sri Ramakrishna would offer Indians a sustained filip to the making of a glorious India.

In appreciation of the Centenary Exhibition, Dr. Abanindranath Tagore, the celebrated Indian artist, wrote as follows to the organiser of the Art Section : ".... I was highly pleased to see many flags with paintings from Nepal in the Arts section. It is very difficult to collect exhibits of Indian Art and Architecture from the very beginning to modern times. Therefore it would be unreasonable to find fault with the organisers if they have been forced in many cases to exhibit only copies or photos of the originals.

"The organisers have done well by making it possible for the public to have an idea of Indian achievements in Arts and Architecture from the very beginning to modern times from the exhibits in the Arts Section."

From the 24th to the 27th February a Musical Conference, attended by well-known artists from Bengal and other parts of India, took place under the auspices of the Centenary Celebration Committee.

From March 1st there will be, for seven days, a World Parliament of Religions which is going to be attended by the leaders of thought of all countries and communities. Then comes a week-long celebration at the Belur Math to give a finishing touch to this year-long and world-wide function.



Let me tell you, strength is what we want, and the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe that "I am the Atman"

—Swami Vivekananda

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## HINDU ETHICS

विसञ्चारि निरालम्बं पञ्चद्वारं चलाचलं । पूर्वं ध्यानपथे धीरः समादध्यान् मनो नरः ।  
तस्य तत् पूर्वसंरुद्धमात्मषष्ठं मनोऽन्तरा । स्फुरिष्यति समुद्धान्तं विंशुदम्बुधरे यथा ।  
जलबिन्दुर्यथा लोलः पर्णस्यः सर्वतश्चलः । एवमेवास्य तच्चित्तं भ्रमेति ध्यानवत्सर्गनि ।  
अनिर्वेदो गतक्लेशो गततन्त्रीरमत्सरः । समादध्यात् पुनश्चेतो ध्यानेन ध्यानयोगवित् ।  
विचारश्चविवेकश्च नितर्कश्चोपजायते । मुनेः समादधानस्य प्रथमं ध्यानमादितः ।  
मनसाक्लिश्यमानस्तु समाधानं न कारयेत् । न निर्वेदं मुनिगच्छेत् कुर्यादिवात्मनो हितम् ।  
पांसुभस्मकरीषाणां यथा वै राशयश्चिताः । सहसा वारिणा सिक्ताः न यान्ति परिभावनम् ।  
क्रमशस्तु शनैर्गच्छेत् सर्वं तत् परिभावनं । एवमेवेन्द्रियग्रामं शनैः संपरिभावयेत् ।

The mind has five egresses and has no resting place. A wise man should at the outset hold this fickle and wandering mind to the meditative way. When the mind has been checked thus within, it will become luminous like the capricious lightning that lines the cloud. In the process of meditation that indrawn mind wanders about like a drop of water on the surface of a leaf. One who understands the practice of meditation should shake off all dejection, worry, lassitude and malice, and apply himself again and again to it. The sage who is practising meditation comes to be endowed with discrimination, knowledge and power to avoid evil. When the mind is exhausted one should not press it on to concentration. Nor should the silent meditator fall into depressing moods ; he should ever be mindful of the good of his self. A heap of dust or of ashes of cowdung-cakes cannot be kneaded into a ball by throwing a quantity of water all on a sudden. By gradually mixing it with water the entire heap can be made into a lump. So too the senses and the mind should be consolidated into a unified idea by a gradual process.

Mahabharata, Santi Parva CXCI 10, 12, 13, 15-18, 19½, 20½.

## THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

[In the following paragraphs is given the substance of some of the important presidential addresses delivered at the Parliament of Religions held in Calcutta in connection with Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Celebrations.]

### I

**I**T is in the fitness of things that, at the conclusion of the year-long celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's centenary, a Parliament of Religions should be held. A parliament of this type, attended by savants professing different religious faiths and representing the cultural heritage of diverse races, is no doubt one of the best means of bringing about inter-religious, inter-cultural and inter-racial concord. For most of our mutual prejudices are due to lack of understanding of others' points of view, and it is only when we exchange thoughts with one another, free from political passions and sectarian prejudices, in an atmosphere of amity and concord, that we can learn to appreciate the spiritual heritage of others.

The idea of Parliament of Religions became popular all the world over perhaps after the famous parliament of that type held in Chicago in 1893, which brought Swami Vivekananda into public lime-light. For India, however, the idea of such parliaments, in the sense of people of different faiths coming together for mutual understanding, is not anything new. From time immemorial we used to settle our religious differences by fair discussion in learned assemblies between the best representatives of different faiths. The best and the most enlightened of our kings like Asoka, Harsha and Akbar were patrons of all faiths known to them, and

they always used to have with them representatives of different religions, forming as it were permanent Parliaments of Religions.

But it is in the life of Sri Ramakrishna that one comes across the most original development in modern times of this idea of establishing religious concord by mutual appreciation and acceptance. What exactly his contribution is, we do not mention here just now, as it has been dealt with, together with proper reference to its historical background, in a subsequent part of the essay. Suffice it to say that nothing can be more appropriate, than a Parliament of Religions, to celebrate the centenary of one whose special mission in life was to declare the truth of all religions. Rightly did Swami Vivekananda say with reference to him, "Aye, long before ideas of universal religion and brotherly feeling between different sects had been mooted and discussed in any country in the world, here, in sight of this city, was living a man whose whole life was a Parliament of Religions, as it should be."

The response from far and near to the call of Sri Ramakrishna has been encouraging. The newspapers report: "Savants from different parts of the globe, professing different religious faiths and representing the cultural heritage of diverse races, met together at the Parliament of Religions that commenced its session yesterday (1st March) afternoon at the Calcutta Town Hall under the distinguished

presidency of the world-renowned philosopher, Dr. Sir Brajendra Nath Seal.... The historic hall, which was artistically decorated for the occasion, was filled to capacity by a distinguished assemblage of delegates and visitors who had journeyed from remote parts of the world to pay their tribute of respect and admiration to the prophet who was the 'consummation of two thousand years of spiritual life of three hundred million people,'—a great symphony composed of the thousand voices and thousand faiths of mankind."

During its several sittings many messages from leading men and papers of religious and cultural importance were read. It will be difficult to give here a summary of all these. We have therefore to confine ourselves to a summary of the presidential addresses delivered by some distinguished personages on different days of the Parliament.

## II

Dr. Sir Brajendra Nath Seal, the well-known Indian scholar and philosopher, presided over the first day's deliberations at the Parliament of Religions. He is one of the few contemporaries of Sri Ramakrishna yet alive, and had seen the Master in flesh and blood. In his presidential address he referred at first to the early life of Sri Ramakrishna, to his mad quest 'after God, his austerities, the methods adopted by him to overcome greed, lust, and pride of caste, and to his experiments with even non-Hindu religions like Islam and Christianity. Proceeding he remarked: "Ramakrishna was a composite personality. In contemplating Truth from the absolute point of view (Nirupadhi) he negatived all condi-

tions and modes (Upadhis), but from the relative or conditioned point of view (Sopadhi) he worshipped Kali, the Divine Mother, as well as other modes and embodiments of the Deity. He worshipped the one in all and the all in one, and he saw no contradiction but only a fuller reality in this. So also he reconciled Sakar and Nirakar Upasana (worship of God with attributes and without attributes). For him there was nothing in the material form of the Deity but God manifesting Himself. The antagonism between matter and spirit did not exist for him."

He next proceeded to describe Sri Ramakrishna's conception of spiritual universalism in its historical perspective, and its points of resemblance and difference from those of his illustrious contemporaries. Ram Mohan Roy sought the universal religion in the common basis of the Hindu, Moslem, Christian and other faiths. He found that each of these great religions was based upon that common faith with a certain distinctive historical and cultural embodiment. The work of formulating a universal religion free from Hindu or Christian theology fell to Brahmananda Keshab Chandra Sen, who attempted this on an eclectic basis, and thus organised rituals and modes of worship. He stood for selective eclecticism. Keshab Chandra would emphasise the central essence of each religion, and acknowledge its truth. In this sense Keshab Chandra would say—It was not that every religion contained truths but every religion was true. So he selected from each religion what he considered its essence, both theoretical as well as practical. He formulated a collation of all those partial aspects in the

Brahmo faith and more especially in the New Dispensation creed. The New Dispensation would thus select the 'distinctive' central essence from each religion and make a collection, a "boquet of followers", as it were. Here it was that Ramakrishna differed from Keshab Chandra. Indeed he differed from his predecessors in two essential respects. First he maintained that the practices of each religion with its rituals and disciplines gave its essence more really and vitally than its theoretical dogmas or creeds. Secondly, it was Ramakrishna's conviction that it was not by selective eclecticism but by syncretism and the whole-hearted acceptance of a religion that its full value and worth could be realised and experienced. According to him selective extracts would kill the vital element in each religion. The observances, practices and rituals of each religion were organic to it. He would be a Hindu with the Hindu, a Moslem with the Moslem and a Christian with a Christian in order to experience the whole truth and efficiency of each of these religions. Such was the Paramahansa's syncretism.

Ramakrishna was thus a cosmic humanist in religion, and not a mere nationalist. He gave the impulse and initiative to universal humanism, and that must be completed in the present age. Religious expression was not the only expression of the ultimate experience. There were also science, philosophy or better scientific philosophy, art or the aesthetic sensibility and mystical experience, all these being phases of humanism. And the consummation was to be found in cosmic humanism which freed mankind from its limitations of outlook by finding man in the uni-

verse and the universe in man. And men must seek it to be free, not of this or that state, but of the solar system and stellar systems and beyond, in one word, of the universe. Man wanted a parliament of man, voicing the federation of world cultures, and what they sought to establish was a synthetic view of life conceived not statically but dynamically as a progressive evolution of humanity.

### III

The third day's presidential address was delivered by Dr. Tagore. At the outset he remarked that he undertook to speak that day not because he claimed possession of any particular idea of God authorised by some time-honoured institution, but because he respected the memory of Sri Ramakrishna. "I venerate Paramahansa Dev," he said, "because he, in an age of religious nihilism, proved the truth of our spiritual heritage by realising it, because the largeness of his spirit could comprehend seemingly antagonistic modes of Sadhana, and because the simplicity of his soul shames for all time the pomp and pedantry of pontiffs and pandits."

Proceeding, Dr. Tagore said he had nothing new to tell. As a poet and as lover of man and of creation, he might perhaps claim to have caught the hushed voice of humanity and felt its suppressed longing for the Infinite. They had, in their human nature, a hunger for Bhooma, for immensity, for something a great deal more than what they needed immediately for the purposes of life. Even in the animals there was this touch of the Infinite which urged them to outlive their own life in the life of the race, accepting sufferings and mak-

ing sacrifices for its sake. The spirit of sacrifice in the parents, their desire to enable their descendants to find better opportunity for food and shelter, was due to this touch of the Infinite. But in the human being this sense went much beyond the struggle for physical life, much beyond extended time and extended space. For man the intimate perception of the Infinite lay in that intensity of consciousness, which he attained only when he realised ultimate value in some ideal of perfection, when in the realisation of some fact of his life, he became aware of an indefinable truth that immensely transcended it. He had realised that a life of perfection was one which had its enjoyment of the great and the beautiful, of the good, of something that they called Truth, which was deeper and larger than any number of facts.

This region did not acknowledge loyalty to physical claims. It was beyond the life of what was called the self that was ever intent upon seeking food and shelter, and upon the perpetuation of the race. That region was mysterious, yet waiting for recognition. It was called the spiritual—a word that was vague only because we had not yet been able to realise its meaning completely.

Harmony was the nature of the spiritual. When Buddha preached *maitri*—the relationship of harmony—he had this truth in mind, namely, that their treatment of the world was wrong when they treated it solely as a fact which could be known and used. He felt that the meaning of the world could be attained only through love, because it was an expression of love which waited for its answer from their soul emancipated

from the bondage of self. Their emancipation could not be negative, for love could never lead to negation. Perfect freedom was a perfect harmony of relationship and not a mere severance of bondage. The soul's emancipation was in the fulfilment of its relation to the central truth of everything, and it was impossible to define because it came at the end of all definitions.

This great law of harmony, which was the essence of the spirit, was revealed in Nature too. The evening sky was revealed to them in its serene aspect of beauty, though they knew that from the fiery whirlpool, which were the stars, chaotic outbursts clashed against one another in a conflict of implacable fury. But over and through it all, there spread a mysterious spirit of harmony, constantly modulating rebellious elements into creative unity, evolving ineffable peace and beauty out of the incoherently battling combatants perpetually struggling to elbow out their neighbours into a turmoil of dissolution. And that great harmony, that ever-lasting Yea,—that Truth, which bridged the dark abysses of time and space, reconciled contradictions and imparted perfect balance to the unstable. That all-pervading mystery was what they called the spiritual in its essence. It was the human aspect of that truth which all great personalities had made their own in their lives and had offered to their fellow-beings in the name of various religions as the means of peace and good will, vehicles of beauty in behaviour, heroism in character, noble aspiration and achievement in all great civilisations.

But religions, when they degenerated into sectarianism, forgot this

spirit of harmony and freedom that constituted their essence. In sectarianism religion approximated to the standard of materialism, the distinctive feature of which consisted in the measurability of its outward expression or the finiteness of its boundaries. Then the love of power, which was really love of self, aggressively domineered over the religious life of man, and that which was the only means by which man could hope to set his spirit free itself became the worst enemy of that freedom. Of all fetters, those that falsely assumed spiritual designations were the most difficult to break. Of all dungeons, the most terrible were those invisible ones where men's souls were imprisoned in self-delusion bred by vanity. For undisguised pursuit of self had safety in its openness, like filth exposed to the sun and air. But the self-magnification, with its consequent thwarting of the best in man, that went on unashamed when religion deadened into sectarianism was a perverse form of worldliness under the mask of religion. It constricted the heart into narrowness much more effectively than the cult of the world based upon material interests could ever do. Desecration of truth in unworthy hands caused more blindness of reason and deadness of moral sensibility than any other deficiency in education, just as the truth represented by science, when used for ignoble traffic, threatened us with annihilation.

Sectarianism bred a spirit of unmitigated vulgarity, possible only when they had no doubt in their minds that they believed in God while their life ignored Him. The pious man of sect was proud because he was confident of his right of possession of God. He hid the Infinite of its won-

der, and made it as trivial as their house-hold furniture. For the object of their possession must necessarily become smaller than themselves. Without acknowledging it the bigotted sectarian nursed the implicit belief that God could be kept secured for himself and his fellows in a cage which was of their own make.

It was at that stage that religion, which began as a liberating agency, ended as a vast prison house. Built on the renunciation of its founder, it became a possessive institution in the hands of its priests. Claiming to be universal it became an active centre of schism and strife.

Great souls, having a comprehensive vision of Truth, had the power to grasp the significance of each different form of Reality that was one in all. But the masses of believers were unable to reconcile the conflict of codes and commands. Their timid and shrunken imagination, instead of being liberated by the vision of the Infinite in religion, was held captive in bigotry and was tortured and exploited by priests and fanatics for uses hardly anticipated by those who originally received it.

"I say to you," he therefore appealed, "that if you are really lovers of Truth, then dare to seek it in its fulness, in all the infinite beauty of its majesty, but never be content to treasure up its vain symbols in miserly seclusion within the stony walls of conventions. Let us revere the great souls in the sublime simplicity of their spiritual altitude which is common to them all, where they meet in universal aspiration to set the spirit of man free from the bondage of his own individual ego, and of the ego of his race and of his creed. In that lowland of traditions where religions

challenge and refute each other's claims and dogmas, there a wise man must pass them by in doubt and dismay.

"I do not mean to advocate a common church for mankind, a universal pattern to which every act of worship and aspiration must conform. The self-expression of God is in the variedness of creation; and our attitude towards the Infinite must in its expression also have a variedness of individuality, ceaseless and unending. When a religion develops the ambition of imposing its doctrine on all, it degrades itself into a tyranny and becomes a form of imperialism. . . . What I plead for is a living recognition of the neglected truth that the reality of religion has its basis in the truth of man's nature, in its most intense and universal need, and so must be constantly tested by it. Where it frustrates that need and outrages its reason, it repudiates its own justification."

#### IV


Sir Francis Younghusband presided over the fifth day's session of the Parliament. He said that he had gone all the way from England because of the very deep regard which he had for many years past for the great work of Sri Ramakrishna. The first reason for the attraction he felt for Sri Ramakrishna was that Ramakrishna, more than any other man, had taught the great simple principle of not merely tolerating other reli-

gions, but also of deeply appreciating them and penetratingly entering into them. He was speaking as a Christian, and what profoundly moved him was the way in which that great saint entered into the Christian religion, entered into the very simple spirit and teachings and life of Christ, so that in a way, they, Christians were able to understand their own religion better from the way in which Ramakrishna had entered into it. It was not only that Ramakrishna had affected the Christians but also the Muslims, the Buddhists and others of other religions. Mankind was very much indebted to Ramakrishna for having spread the ideal of the unity of religions and for having lived it in his own life. That doctrine rested upon a very simple principle upon which the whole universe was governed, and that was unity in diversity. Diversity always existed, varieties there would always be as there always had been. Each one of them was different from the other as each particle of the universe was different from the other. They had to retain, each one of them, his own individuality but they must also realise that deep down was the fundamental unity — unity of all differences, of all varieties, of all diversities. It was not possible to make every one think and act like one another. By acting upon the doctrine mentioned above, each one became truer to oneself and truer to the divinity within one.



## REMINISCENCES OF THE HOLY MOTHER

[Sri Saradamani Devi, otherwise known as the Holy Mother, was the consort of Sri Ramakrishna. She was wife and nun at the same time. Though possessed of great spiritual attainments and respected and worshipped like a goddess by the devotees of the Master, she was always simple and unsophisticated in her life and ways of thought. In these reminiscences of a great woman of modern India, the reader will get intimate glimpses of a glorious type of womanhood through the little acts and simple talks of every-day life.]

 NE day when the Holy Mother was confined to bed with her fatal illness, I went to the Udbodhan office to pay my respects to her. No one else was in the room. She had been feeling slightly better for a few days. During the daytime she used to rest in that room. It was the month of April. No sooner did I take the dust of her feet than she began to ask me about the welfare of the members of my family. Seeing her body extremely thin and emaciated, I said, "Mother, this time you look very ill. I have never seen you in a worse condition."

Mother: Yes, my child, I am very weak. It seems to me that the duty of this life, as ordained by Sri Ramakrishna, is now over. There is a constant yearning in my mind for him. I do not desire anything else. I used to love Radhu so much. I have done a great deal for her comfort and happiness; but now I do not care even for her. Her very presence annoys me. At her sight I think, 'Why should she come before me and drag my mind down to a lower plane?' Sri Ramakrishna, for the sake of his work, kept my mind so long on the worldly plane through Radhu,—otherwise could I possibly have lived after his passing away?

Devotee: Mother, it is very painful for us to hear such things from you. What will be our fate if you

also go away? We lack very much in renunciation and spiritual discipline. Renunciation is almost out of the question as far as we are concerned. Without you, where shall we get the strength to live in this world of lure and temptation? Whenever any weakness crept into our mind, we ran to you, and you showed us the way to overcome it. Now, where shall we go? It will leave us extremely helpless.

Mother (with great force): Why should you be helpless? Is not Sri Ramakrishna looking after your welfare? Why should you worry so much? I have already surrendered you at his feet. You must move within a circle. You cannot go outside it. He has been protecting you all the time.

Devotee: No doubt we remember many a time the grace of Sri Ramakrishna, but we do not always realize it. Belief and doubt alternately assail our mind. But we see you most tangibly. We always tell you about our weal and woe. You also advise us as to what course we should follow in life, after thinking of the pros and cons of everything. Therefore it convinces us beyond the shadow of a doubt that we have at last found refuge in you.

Mother: Always remember that Sri Ramakrishna alone is our protector. If you forget this, you will find yourself in a maze. Do you

know why I asked you today about your mother and other members of the family ? Before that I had heard about the death of your father from Gonen. Then I asked him if your mother had any other relative and also about her means of livelihood. I further inquired if she were dependent upon you. Coming to learn that she could manage without you, I thought, 'That is good. This boy has pious intentions. Now through the grace of Sri Ramakrishna, there will be no serious obstacle to prevent you from leading a spiritual life.' Everyone should serve his mother. It is all the more incumbent upon you because you have all come to me with the purpose of dedicating your life to the service of others. Had your father not left any money for your mother, I would have asked you to earn money and look after her comfort. Through the grace of Sri Ramakrishna, that obstacle has been removed. Simply see that the money left at her disposal is not wasted. Make some arrangement about it, and look after her as much as you can. Is it a small advantage for you ? One cannot earn money in strictly honest ways. Money always taints the mind. For this reason I ask you to settle the pecuniary affairs of your mother as soon as possible. Such is the fascination of money that if you involve yourself too much in it, you will feel attracted to it. You may think that you are above money and that you will never feel any attraction for it as you have once renounced it. You may further think that at any moment you may leave it behind. No, child, never harbour this thought in your mind. Through a tiny hole it will enter into your mind and then strangle you gradually.

You will not even know it. Especially as you belong to Calcutta, you know the value of money. Settle your mother's affairs as soon as possible and run away from Calcutta. Further, if you can persuade your mother to go to a holy place, you can both lead a spiritual life, forgetting your worldly relationship. Just now your mother is stricken with grief. I think this is the best arrangement. Your mother also is now quite advanced in years. Always talk to her about God. You will really fulfill the duty of a son if you can help her to gather the means for her ultimate journey. You have grown by sucking her milk. How much suffering did she undergo to raise you to manhood ! Know that service to her is your highest duty. But it is a quite different matter if she stands in the way of your spiritual life. Why don't you bring her to me ? I shall see what she is like. I may give her a few words of instruction if I find it suitable. But beware ! Don't involve yourself in worldliness on the plea of serving your mother. After all, it is nothing but the maintenance of a widow. It means a very trifling sum. Try to settle her affairs as quickly as possible, even at a loss. Sri Ramakrishna could never bear the touch of money. You are all out in the world, taking his name on your lips. Always remember his words. Money is at the root of all the disasters you see in the world. You are young. Money will attract your mind to other temptations. Beware !

Devotee : I thought of bringing my mother here once for your blessing. But I checked this desire on account of your ill health.

Mother : No, no ! Bring her one day. So many people are coming

here, and as regards the body, it will only be worse day by day. Bring her as soon as possible. In the morning I feel a little better. Can you bring her at that time? Don't be late, otherwise they will not allow you to come to me.

Devotee : Mother, it is very painful to hear these words from you. From the words you are repeatedly using to tell about your body, it seems that you have no further desire to maintain it.

Mother : To keep the body alive or not, does not depend upon me. It is the will of God. Why should you be worried about it? You cannot stay with me for a long time. You generally live in the Belur Math or elsewhere. How many of you have the advantage of staying with me or talking to me? You do not even let me know your whereabouts.

Devotee : No doubt it is not possible for us to stay with you always, but we have the firm conviction that you are alive. Whenever any weakness comes to our mind, we know that we can remove it simply by your presence.

Mother : Do you think that even if this body passes away, I can have any release unless every one of you whose responsibility I have taken on myself, is out of bondage? I must constantly live with them. I have taken complete charge of everything good or bad regarding them. Is it a trifle to give initiation? What a tremendous responsibility we have to accept! How much anxiety we have to suffer for them! Just see! Your father is dead, and that at once made me worry about you. I thought, 'What is this test again that Sri Ramakrishna is making him pass

through? That you may come out of this ordeal is my constant thought. For this reason I gave you all this advice. Can you understand everything we say? If you could do so, that would have lightened my worries to a great extent. Sri Ramakrishna is playing with his different children in diverse ways, but I have to bear the brunt of it. I cannot simply set aside those whom I have accepted as my own.

Devotee : Mother, it fills our mind with terror even to think to whom we should go or what will become of us during your absence.

Mother : Why? Rakhal\* and other children of Sri Ramakrishna are here. Are they to be taken lightly? You are very fond of Rakhal. Ask him about any doubt that crosses your mind. And what is there to ask? It is not always profitable to ask many questions. You cannot assimilate even one thing. It will only add to your worry if you stuff your mind with ten ideas. Dive deep into what you have already received. Practice meditation and always repeat His holy name. Live in pious company. Never allow egoism to raise its head. Look at Rakhal. How childlike he is! Even now he is just like a small child. Look at Sarat†! How much work he does! How much trouble he undergoes, but always his lips are closed. He is a holy man. Why should he undergo all these troubles? They can be absorbed in God day and night if they merely wish it. Only for your welfare, they drag their mind down to the worldly plane. Always keep the picture of their character before your

\* Swami Brahmananda.

† Swami Saradananda.

eyes. Serve them with all your heart and soul and always keep in mind whose child you are, under whose protection you live. Whenever any bad idea crosses your mind, say, 'I am

His child. Is it possible for me to stoop so low?' You will find that this thought will strengthen your mind and you will attain to abiding peace.

## SPIRITUAL IDEALS: PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL

*By Swami Gnaneswarananda*

[Swami Gnaneswarananda is a monk of the Ramakrishna Order and is the Head of the Vedanta Centre at Chicago. The following article embodies a lecture delivered by him in March last before an American audience. The neglect of the impersonal ideal as a philosophic abstraction and the dismissal of the personal one as trite convention leave the faithless common man devoid of any religious attitude. A logical statement of the constitutional necessity of both the ideals for man in search after Truth, Beauty and Goodness, and a critical appreciation of both the ideals form the subject-matter of this essay.]

**F**ROM the very dawn of human civilisation advanced thinkers, philosophers, and mystics have conceived the highest principle that underlies everything, in terms of the impersonal, in the form of an abstract principle. We find evidence of it in the famous literature of the Indo-Aryans, beginning from the Vedas and the Upanishads, down the ages in mythology and great epics. The Upanishads, for the first time in the history of humanity, described the highest principle as Sat-Chit-Anandam, in other words, Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss-absolute. That is to say, the highest ideal of man is the attainment of (a) absolute existence—so that his existence will not be impaired by anything; (b) absolute knowledge—so that there will be nothing he cannot know, and (c) absolute bliss—so that there will not be any thing to cause him suffering of any kind. Coming down into a later period we find the very same ideal described as Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram—meaning truth, goodness and beauty. We find that in the West

also among the neo-Platonists and the Platonists, these three words have been extensively used. They describe God as the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, giving a little personal or concrete touch to it. God is the ideal in which humanity can conceive in a concrete form the highest fulfilment of truth, goodness and beauty. Although the neo-Platonists do not describe God in terms of the personal, yet in their delineation of the abstract there is a delightful touch of the concrete. The Indo-Aryans of the early Vedic age conceived God as both personal and impersonal. As an aspirant advances in his thoughts, as his mind becomes thoroughly trained in the philosophical understanding of the subtle, he rises above the concrete idea of God and conceives the final truth in terms of the abstract.

Which one of these conceptions is more beneficial to humanity—the concrete or the abstract? Could they be compared at all? The human mind is so constituted that it can only function in terms of limitation in time, space and causation. In

order to think, it gives a concrete form to the absolute principle. Who can comprehend beauty without thinking of anything of beauty located in space or time? We shall come gradually to the consideration of a state of our consciousness where we do not have to think by means of the mind. We know by means of another faculty. Consider now how we think with our minds. It must concretize an abstract principle and place the objects of its thought in space and time, and describe for them a chain of causation. White cannot be thought of unless we think of white snow, linen, clouds, etc. The objectification of the mind might not be distinctly definite, but if you analyse your concept of whiteness you will find that it occupies some concrete manifestation. To be more definite, could you enjoy love without having any object to love? Love is an abstract principle. In order to manifest and enjoy that love we superimpose it on an object, in which we realise our ideal. Friendship too is an abstract principle. Could we enjoy 'friendship' without thinking of a particular friend or friends? And yet love or friendship exists irrespective of your or mine, or anybody else's realisation of them. There is an abstract ideal behind every realisation which we project out of ourselves in the form of a concrete manifestation. Without doing so the finite mind cannot function at all.

If humanity had to start from the very beginning to attain to its highest ideal of perfection, without being allowed to manifest its idealism in the form of concrete personal images, I doubt very much if it would have made any progress at all in the realm

of religion, philosophy or spiritual realisation. The fact that the human mind can function only through the concrete does not prove that the impersonal or the abstract idealism does not exist. Not only does it exist, but fundamentally it is the only truth. Redness as is manifest in a flower is not the all of redness—it is just a partial manifestation of redness which is really limitless. The abstract is limitless, and hence, infinite; whereas the concrete is limited, therefore changeable and destructible. If you want to transcend limit, you have to realise the abstract instead of the personal or concrete. You cannot transcend limitation thinking of form or quality. Suppose you enjoy friendship or love in a particular person, by your body and mind, you should know that it is only one manifestation, which does not exhaust the source of infinite love or friendship in you or in your friend. Such a relation is subject to change and destruction. Nevertheless, love exists in spite of the particular manifestation to or from which you have found yourself attached or detached. It is in the abstract alone that lies the fullness and completion of any ideal which one might want to realize in one's life. You might have twenty good friends and your expectations could have been realised in all of them, but could you ever say that the highest ideal of friendship has been exhausted in your concrete relations? You will always realise how infinitesimally small and inadequate are your concrete achievements compared with what remains in the realm of the unexpressed. The abstract is the ocean, and the concrete the ripples; the abstract is the atmosphere, and the concrete the pleasant breeze

—the two are one and the same, in the last analysis.

There is a special type, however, that wants to transcend the personal and to be absorbed in the impersonal. One cannot conceive of the abstract or think of it by one's finite mind. There is a deeper stratum of the human consciousness which we very seldom consciously exercise, with the help of which one can realise the abstract and the impersonal. But it requires a good deal of exercise and practice to unfold that deeper faculty. For that reason one's spiritual march starts very often along the common highway of the concrete. Consequently Hindu religious philosophy teaches two separate systems, established and elaborated by many great leaders.

Bhakti Yoga, accepting the concrete conception, teaches that the highest ideal is God, in whom is manifest the highest ideal of absolute perfection. God is good. He is the concrete embodiment of truth, love, beauty, and all other abstract qualities of perfection that the human mind can conceive of. But that again does not mean that God is a person who has all these qualities. It must not be forgotten that it is for the convenience of our finite minds that such a conceivable ideal is presented to us. A personal conception of God is necessary for the finite human mind to function on it, but it must be understood that such a conception does not exhaust the abstract idealism behind. Hinduism, with the understanding of the highest abstract principle, regards the concrete conception of different Gods and Goddesses as so many relative manifestations of the same one Brahman, or the Absolute. Philosophy establishes the

truth that the highest ideal is something abstract, and all we can think of it is that it is the zenith of truth, beauty and goodness. In mythology we find that those abstract qualities have been concretized and evolved into the conception of three great personalities which form the Hindu trinity. The True has been concretised as Brahma, the Beautiful as Vishnu, the second person of the trinity, and the Good in the form of Shiva, the third person of the trinity. They preside, respectively, over the three great functions of projection, preservation, and dissolution, or bringing back into the source, as expressed by the three Sanskrit words: Sristi, Sthiti and Pralaya. That these are the three aspects of one great power, even an ignorant worshipper of any concrete form never fails to recognise. But every devout worshipper must adhere loyally and faithfully to his own desired form or Ishtam. Thus the masses of the Hindu people have made these concrete personalities live with them in their everyday life. Literature, music, poetry, painting, nay, every effort of the human heart, including modest house-keeping, have developed to a certain state of spiritual perfection around these concrete conceptions of the abstract.

We very often hear people condemn the concrete conception of God, but a thoughtful mind never dares to trifle with such an uplifting philosophy. One has to be broadminded and must carefully remember that the concrete conception is one's personal ideal and does not exhaust the abstract principle of which it is a manifestation. If you have a red garment and like the colour of it, you have no right to say that it is the

only red, which entirely covers the quality of redness. It could be manifest in different shades and be enjoyed differently by different persons. If you have any understanding at all, you will leave others to enjoy their ideal and not try to convince them that their's is wrong and yours is the only right conception. Such a tendency of intolerance shows that you do not understand your own ideal, which is no more an ideal but a mere idol. 'On the other hand, an idol, so-called, can be conceived of as an ideal. If I admire a little image and project my highest conception of divinity and perfection in it, and if I do not condemn or disturb others who do not think so—knowing that there could be innumerable ideals and conceptions of Divinity—the image is not my idol but the symbol of my ideal in a concrete form. Whereas, if in one rigid conception you confine everything and fail to see that outside of your conception there could be others—you criticize them and call them idolatrous—, your conception is an idol, not theirs ; you are idolatrous, not they.

Herein lies the depth and distinction of Hindu philosophy, which I want to explain. If one wholeheartedly accepts and holds on to a concrete ideal, finding in it the expression of a particular phase of one's abstract idealism, for one's own convenience of comprehension, one does in no way limit or corrupt the highest universal principle. Step by step we evolve and understand more and more the universal abstract ideal behind our personal deities. Our inner faculties of higher understanding develop and expand by our sincere devotion to our chosen ideal, so that we are able, gradually, to conceive of that totality

of which our individual ideal is a part. Consequently, for the advancement of humanity towards the goal of infinite perfection, personal idealism is a necessary step. Allow me to make a personal statement as an illustration. Had it not been for living personalities in whom I have witnessed my highest ideal of purity, goodness, and spirituality, I would not have been interested in religion at all. And I can say that it is more or less true of all of us. I am leaving aside those highly advanced souls who can remain absorbed in the impersonal. I am thinking of the average man or woman who has to use his or her untrained mind. For such, a concrete personal ideal is a necessary step. But we must not forget that a step is a step. When we mistake the step for the goal, we become dogmatic and narrow-minded, and hence criticize others and create disturbance for the rest. Such has been the case with many who adhere to personal conceptions without any understanding of the universal background of the impersonal. The trouble is that we too often accept a personal religious creed as a matter of fact. Because my fore-fathers believed, I believe. One very seldom goes deeper into one's own consciousness to find out if one really believes in such creeds even with one's own standard of analysis. Not only does such a mind never think of making any progress towards the highest ideal, but it never can even think of the existence of any besides its own. Such form the dogmatic, narrow-minded, and ignorant population of the world, and they are responsible for most of the trouble created on the face of this good earth. An idol is not made of stone, brass or wood but of the narrow-mindedness and rigidity

of one's understanding. I do not call a stone image an idol. I have been with people who, though highly evolved in their spiritual understanding, can still worship any image, which to them is just a stimulus to get into an exalted state of inner realisation. Would you still call that an idol? When we study geography, the maps, globes, etc., that we use to help our understanding are not the countries we study. The map of America is not the United States. It only helps the unfolding mind to study the country more conveniently. You cannot do without the map. But supposing the map occupies the place of the real country and you cannot see anything beyond your little paper. You have made an idol of your map and you need be awakened for your own good. The personal ideals of spirituality can stand and ought to be numerous, and are to be treated as maps, figures, and other instruments to help the advancement of understanding of a progressive mind—and there are few of us who can do without such help—but should never be considered as the goal. It is a convenient step towards the understanding of the abstract, the limitless, the one universal reality without a second.

In the history of humanity God-men have appeared from time to time, in all ages and in all countries, in whom the rest of the world has realized the fulfilment of the highest conception of perfection. In a Moses, Zarathustra, Confucious, Christ, Krishna, Mahammed, Buddha or Ramakrishna we find more efficient ready-made patterns of perfection than we could conceive by means of our finite minds. Could you form by means of your mind a higher conception of human perfection than you

can in the concrete figure of a Buddha, for instance? You may not be able to give a better one than what was lived in a Christ or a Buddha. Subtract the lives of all such God-men and women from the store of our understanding. What remains is only words without very much sense. Consequently, I for one feel very grateful to all these great heroes, our spiritual ideals, who have come on earth to inspire us with concrete standards of different ideals of perfection. A rational mind has no difficulty to find that in each one of these great ones there is a concrete manifestation of the highest ideal of goodness and spirituality. If we accept any one of these heroes and give our heart's admiration and sincere devotion to him, nay, if we meditate and keep constant contact with such ideals by means of our love, it goes without saying that a good deal of their character will be reflected in us. We shall be Christ-like or Buddha-like ourselves. If we think of, concentrate, and meditate with love and devotion on any manifestation, if our consciousness occupies any concrete object of thought, gradually our mind and body will reflect the qualities of the object of our devotion. The same effect is attained with kindred feelings like hatred, fear or anger. Suppose you are scared or obsessed by the fear of a buffalo, and that sense of horror has exercised such a powerful influence on your consciousness that constantly you think of an ugly looking buffalo. I will say that very soon you will come to look like a buffalo, and act like one. It is a psychological fact. Therefore if you are constantly attached to the personal ideal of a Christ, Krishna or Moses, and if you have learnt the art



of keeping your mind in close contact with such an ideal, by means of your thoughts, acts, and speech, what will be the result? You will attain perfection. If I make another statement perhaps it will shock you but nevertheless it is a psychological fact. Suppose that in the Christ is contained a very perfect ideal, and a person constantly thinks of him as his deadliest enemy on earth and constantly meditates on him with the worst possible hatred—remember that if you hate anything you cannot disassociate your consciousness from that —, what will be the result? That man, too, in spite of his resistance, will reflect upon himself Christ-like qualities. This has been accepted as a method by the great Rishis. As you can meditate through love, you can do so through your hatred. By constant meditation on an ideal or object, no matter how it is done, one reflects its qualities. If your whole personality reflects the qualities of a Christ, what more spiritual perfection do you want? Supposing you have chosen your ideal with caution, knowing fully that by meditating on such you will reflect his qualities, you will find that gradually you will lead an ideal life, your inner faculties will broaden and sharpen thereby, and gradually you will transcend the limitation of your ideal in form. He will not only appear as the concrete deity but also as an all-pervading essence running equally through all. You will see your God in everything. Such expansion and transformation of God-consciousness has happened in the lives of many. With extreme love a woman started to meditate on an image of baby Krishna, realising in him the concrete manifestation of God—truth, purity, beauty and love

—, and Gopala, or baby Krishna, in a concrete form, was her companion for many years. Eventually the personality of Gopala expanded for her, and she saw Gopala in everything. Finally she remained absorbed in the realization of the One Absolute. Both these realisations are phases of the one and the same Absolute Brahman.

Very often I lose all sense of limit in space or time as I look at the star-spangled firmament. The heavenly luminaries which at first give me the idea of the vastness of infinite space vanish from my consciousness, and what remains is an abstract Truth—something which cannot be expressed in the human language. At other times, when my human faculties like love, affection or admiration get the better of me, I do not care for the infinite. I feel a hunger for the concrete. I want my God to come to me in a human form, to sit by me, to talk to me, and to exchange and share my human dealings with me. Am I absolutely wrong? Can man enjoy a closer relationship with the Infinite? Does the Absolute come down in the form of an Avatar, or God incarnate of Hindu philosophy, to give the God-thirsty souls a chance to enjoy contact by means of their senses? Yes, it is the Formless which manifests itself in the form of the concrete. You realise the Absolute behind such a concrete figure. He gives you the opportunity of touching Him, of seeing Him by means of your mortal eyes, and of sharing all your human faculties with Him. Suppose God comes to you in the form of a human friend and lives with you every day, helps you and loves you, and you love Him, wouldn't that be a condition you are eager to enjoy? It is the craving of

the human heart which makes the Absolute become concrete.

There was a time when I was deeply interested in the study of the philosophy of the Absolute, which is abstract and monistic, and I did not have any use for dualism or the philosophy of the concrete. I refused to read about Krishna, Christ or Buddha, calling such matter "sentimental stuff." Even the personality of Sri Ramakrishna did not attract me. I did not want to be a slave of God. I wanted to realize the Absolute and be one with it. For years I did all I could to stay as close as possible to my ideal, maintaining a respect for those who wanted to follow a different path from mine. Once I was puzzled because I could not establish any logical harmony between the abstract and the concrete. I admired both and could not say that one was true and the other false, but I could not synthesize the two into one rational philosophy. When I was expounding monism in one of my classes, the question was asked, "What place do you give to those who sincerely worship and adore a personal God?" I could not arrive at any conclusion. I wanted some time to ponder over it, so I said, "Give me some time. I shall discuss it next week." Those seven days I was practically buried in books. I consulted big fat volumes but could not arrive at any definite conclusion. A neighbour's little girl used to come to our Centre very often, whenever she wanted to play or visit. We used to call her our little mother and she felt very happy. Of course, I used to entertain her and play with her as much as I could. She came on her usual visit on the morning of the seventh day, pushed my volumes

aside, and wanted me to play with her. But I could not spare the time for her. I said, "Mother, go and play with so and so." Being disappointed she became angry and stubborn. She threw my books away. "You are naughty," she said, "you have been reading, reading and reading for days, and you have not played with me at all." She was carrying a little doll in her arms. Pointing to it she continued, "Mother says this doll is my baby, but I don't think so for it is only a doll. You are my baby, aren't you? But I think I am going to love my dolly more than I love you. I cannot play with you whenever I want to. That is one trouble with you. My dolly is always ready to play. And then when these people talk to you and you talk to them, I cannot come at all. But my dolly is always mine. Yet what bothers me most is that you are *too big*! If I want to caress my dolly I can, but you would not let me caress you. What good are you? I'm through with you. I shall call my dolly 'Swami baby,' and love it." And she ran away. Do you realise that she gave me the truth which my big volumes could not? She solved my puzzle once and for all times. Do I not feel like saying, "Brahman, you are too big for me, a poor little child? I want to love you and play with you but you are not ready to play with me. You are absorbed in your big work. When I want to caress you, you hide behind your mist of limitlessness. I wish you were like a little doll so that I could handle you more freely. I would not let you be so great. I want you to come to me in the form of *my dolly*."

To satisfy our sincere craving, that limitless one comes to us as our little dolly. It gives us the opportunity to love it, leading us eventually to the highest goal of perfection. Thus the two conceptions are not only not contradictory, but are absolutely necessary for our growth and comprehension. You cannot compare one with the other and say, "This is high and that is low." You cannot give any extra credit to those who are attached only to the absolute or to the concrete. Each one is equally great in his own place. Human nature loves variety. Why not enjoy the same dish with different sauces? At times when it gets a little too monotonous to reason, discriminate, and renounce, I want to contact the abstract in a concrete form, and even when I enjoy the concrete I know that my little doll does not exhaust its infinite background. It cannot even be separated from the one Absolute; so loving my doll, I love the Infinite. If you do not like my doll, what does it matter? I am not going to argue or quarrel with you. I did not use up all the material out of which dolls are made. You go ahead and make your own. If you don't care for any doll, I do; so let me have mine. There is no harm in our loving a doll

so long as we know that we need the concrete as a step to reach the infinite. Even being absorbed in the Infinite sometimes you feel like having a contact with it; you want that Absolute to play with you. Then again you make a doll out of the Infinite and play with it. Rama-krishna started with the concrete conception of God as a human mother and gradually got absorbed into the Absolute. But he was not satisfied to stay there. He wanted to play. Consequently he had to have the concrete 'Mother' again. He only epitomized the truth that the concrete deity, when loved with all your being, melts into the Absolute, and makes you transcend all your limitations. And then again, if you want to exercise your faculties, that limitless One appears in the form of your personal deity. The personal is only a reading of the impersonal, and the impersonal is the background for the personal. Knowing the truth, let us go forward in our own way without creating any disturbance for others. Knowing that your conception is your personal choice, you should let others enjoy theirs, too. Thereby we will be able to establish peace, love, strength of understanding, power and perfection.

## PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS

By Dr. M. H. Syed, M.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., L.T. .

[Dr. Syed of the Allahabad University belongs to that not very large group of academicians whose writings discard all cultural compartmentalizations and disclose a perfect matching of deep erudition and broad outlook. In the following spontaneous reflections is pointed out in a simple and lucid manner the urgency of cultivating moral purity as the first and principal condition of all higher realisations; individual and collective.]

### I

**M**AN often feels lonely when his friends desert him and relatives discard him. Naturally he feels miserable and wretched. If he happens to be a spiritually-minded person he should remind himself of the fact that he is never *alone*. The Supreme Being whose life he fully shares is ever with him. He is lonely only so long as he turns his attention away from Him and remains occupied with the objects of his senses and worldly affairs. Whenever he puts himself in tune with the Infinite and begins to live, move and have his being in Him, he not only shakes off the spirit of loneliness but acquires full power, plenty and peace by virtue of his being in close proximity with the Divine Spirit. He is ever ready to befriend him. There is nothing wanting on His side. Ishwara along with His spiritual hierarchy of perfected and liberated beings, is ever responsive to us. The moment we think of them they welcome us. We have to purge ourselves of all our worldly desires, vanities and shortcomings in order to make ourselves fit receptacles for their spiritual influence. The pure beings alone can merge themselves in the Pure who is the source of all bliss and happiness.

### II

Those who have been vouchsafed with a clear understanding of Divine

wisdom should consider themselves really very fortunate, in as much as they have found the supreme value of life and have been directed to tread the path of spiritual progress. They should incessantly struggle with their lower nature and try to overcome their vicious tendencies, the result of their past *Samskara*. In the course of time they are bound to succeed.

### III

I met a German young man who was at the time engaged in vigorous physical exercise the like of which I had never seen before. I expressed my admiration for his method of developing his body. He smiled and remarked, "You know we have lost the war, that is why we are rebuilding ourselves and putting fresh life into our nation." His words, simple and unostentatious as they were, inspired me considerably and I began to reflect on them in the following ways :—We are so often discouraged by our failures that we generally cease to make fresh efforts, and consider ourselves incapable beings, altogether oblivious of the fact that we are made after the image of God and that we potentially share divine life. *Self-confidence*, in the true sense of the word, is absolutely necessary. If we sincerely believe in our hidden and unevolved powers, and in the boundless possibilities of progress

upward, we should never be daunted by our failures of any kind and in any department of life. Every effort that we strenuously make, though it may result in failure for the time being, is a step forward in achieving our goal. Every cause that we set up is bound to have its result sooner or later. So we should go on struggling. Our efforts may be accompanied by temporary failures, but we should always look ahead for final victory which is as certain as death.

#### IV

"Europeans, as a rule, have an innate dislike and mistrust of the doctrine that the world is vain or unreal . . . . . They demand a religion which theoretically justifies the strenuous life. All this is a matter of temperament and the temperament is so common that it needs no explanation. What needs explanation is rather the other temperament which rejects this world as unsatisfactory and sets up another ideal, another sphere, another standard of values." \* These remarks contain some element of truth as well as lack of true understanding of the complete view of life, its ideals, progress and final destiny.

#### V

When we look around us and closely observe the moral, material and economical condition of mankind, we are grieved to see them full of sorrow and suffering of every kind. There seems to be no prospect of human suffering coming to an end.

Heart-rending misery, agonising pain, various kinds of disaster, cyclone, earthquake, floods, famine

and pestilence, are seen all over the world sometime or the other. There is no country where all people are happy and contented. The number of unhappy people is certainly greater than the number of happy ones. What is the cause of this state of affairs? Is there any possible explanation of the ever-increasing volume of pain and suffering in this world? There is no smoke without fire and there is no effect without a cause. Every action whether good or bad bears its fruit.

If we observe the conduct of the majority of people to-day or the past, we find that they are more inclined to break the moral law than to respect and conform to it. We sin, therefore we suffer. This process of sinning and suffering seems to be unending. Its true cause is not far to seek. It is within us. We alone can prevent it.

#### VI

'Ceasing from evil ways' is an uncompromising condition for moral and spiritual life. All the religions are unanimous on this point. Without moral life there is no progress to higher life. It is interesting to bear in mind that not only religious teachers disapprove of immorality but the public opinion of the world also looks down upon it. The public and its opinion is not different from the One Life which we all share. The Self in the Divine men and in the man of the world is one and the same. The instinctive moral sense of both the type of men repels immoral deeds which are rightly condemned by what is called public opinion.

#### VII

There is no fear of eternal hell for one who accepts the Hindu view of

\* Sir Charles Eliot. *Hinduism and Buddhism IX-XI—Introduction.*

life. On account of his evil deeds a man is consigned to hell fire for a time being but when his evil *Karma* is exhausted he is set free from its torture. He can begin his life afresh and cease from evil ways in order to avoid recurrence of agonising experience in hell.

## LAYMAN'S ETHICS

*By Dr. B. Bhattacharya, M.A., Ph.D.*

[Within the limits of the ensuing essay Dr. Binayatosh Bhattacharya, Director of the Baroda Orient Institute and author of several important contributions to the study of Mahayana Buddhism, propounds a scheme of pure ethics for the layman, eschewing all religious lables. Among the bewildering tangle of civil and sacerdotal regulations and statutes, the great advantage of promulgating a simple commonsense code of ethics, which comes within the comprehension of the lowliest and the unlettered, cannot be over-estimated. This, however, does not give the least warrant to suppose that ethics resting on external transiciencies without deriving its sanction and support from the central idea of religion, namely, potential divinity and consequent solidarity of man, could admit of any enduring value. The following lucid presentation of the elements of common ethics, we hope, will be appreciated by all interested in public welfare and especially in the education of adults.]

WE are living in an age when religion has become a by-word for discord, strife and exploitation. Religion which should bring peace and harmony and solace and comfort to human beings, has become to-day the source of strife and unhappiness. It has led men to commit acts of cruelty and deeds of violence. To quote the words of Beranger : "When in our days Religion is made a political engine, she exposes herself to having her sacred character forgotten." The most tolerant become intolerant in her fair name. Her high and elevating principles are forgotten in the strife and struggle for political supremacy. This worldliness—this hard-heartedness of those who profess one or other form of religion has exposed religion itself to great danger and reproach. No one can deny that in these modern days the divergence of religious practices from religious principles is very great. Religion is no longer a man's

best armour. It has come to serve him as the worst cloak.

The question then naturally arises, how best can we save ourselves from the onslaught of materialism and from the false position that has arisen from the divergence between religious principles and its preachers. Some thoughtful scholars have dreamt of a universal religion, based upon the fundamental essentials, collected from the doctrines of all the existing religions. Some, on the other hand, have gone to the other extreme and have ruthlessly tried to demolish the outward forms of religion. These later have been led by a spirit of *negation* which refuses to understand the past and think of the future. To them the present counts for everything. They forget that the past, present and the future are but the conventional phrases set up by man. Time is but one and indivisible and is an attribute of the Infinite in finite form.

Irreligion connotes irresponsibility, irresponsibility to oneself and irresponsibility towards others. For such, life has no value. "From the dust unto dust returneth" is all that they know and believe in. The utter barrenness of this view-point one need not labour to point out. "True religion is the foundation of society and when that is shattered by contempt, the whole fabric cannot be stable and lasting."

In the domain of law, we find three laws constantly operating in the world. The first is the Divine Law, the second the Moral Law and the third the State Law. The first belongs to religion, the second to the domain of ethics, while the third to polity. In bidding good-bye to religion we are refusing to admit the operation of Divine Law or the Law of God. The State Laws, by their very nature, cover very little ground, and are limited in their operation. The problem thus arises as to how to make men good, how to make men righteous or how to set the wheel of righteousness in motion? or in other words how to make this little planet of ours habitable, when the principles and practice of various religions are divergent and confusing?

Some admit the existence of God, while the others stoutly deny Him. Like Cicero some believe that we have within us the spark of the *Divine Spirit*. "Whatever that be, which thinks, which understands, which wills, which acts, it is something celestial and divine, and upon that account must necessarily be divine." To them the

"Soul in earth is an immortal guest

A spark which upward tends by  
Nature's force

A stream that is directed from  
its parents' source,"

while others will have nothing to do with things which their eyes do not see and their senses do not perceive. Some have faith in the transmigration of spirit, while others will laugh in contempt at these silly doctrines. Some will hold the Vedas as the repository of all religious wisdom while others will cite the Bible, the Koran or other holy books. The science of comparative religion has shown their heterogeneous character and wide divergence of doctrines so as not to admit of their universal applicability.

When, however, we examine the moral side of all religions, we find much greater agreement. Wherever man may live, to whatever community he may belong, his needs are almost the same, and in order that he may obtain the necessities of life and live happily along with others and not come in clash with them, a body of laws must be in existence which is required to be followed by all men. Moral laws have been relegated to the province of religion, and to-day, if we have to recover the moral laws, we have to hunt the religious scriptures. Man's needs being the same everywhere, these moral laws, at least their general framework, remains the same, and thus it is not difficult to find out the moral needs of human beings and reduce them to a system. This is an ambitious attempt but sometime or other this will have to be done. It will be necessary to *separate pure ethics from religion*. This is absolutely the prime necessity of the modern age.

This, however, is not the place to give details of an ethical system which may be acceptable to one and

all, whatever may be their faith, creed, religion, dogma, society, place or language. But nevertheless an humble attempt is worth making, looking to the immense importance of such a system, and if nothing else can be done, at least the system may be outlined in as few words as possible, without touching any problem that may be regarded as controversial.

How a child is born, and why it is born in different localities and different families, rich and poor, is beyond the scope of layman's ethics. We can see it coming to the earth and seeing the first light of the day in a helpless condition, in a particular environment and dependent entirely on the mercy of others. It receives the affection of the parents, care of the relatives and attention of the society in which it is born. It does nothing in return for the benefits it receives from others because it is incapable of doing anything in return. The child thus grows gradually and develops its faculties of sight, speech and comprehension by slow degrees, comes closer in contact with the manifold aspects of the life, the society and the state that environs it, and its mental horizon widens. The growing man comes in touch with his environments, goes on receiving benefits and returning benefits and discharging his duties to himself and to others in his own way. If fortunately his faculties are developed in the right way, he becomes an asset to the society, but if otherwise, he becomes a trouble to the society. Ethics takes into account the right and wrong in a man and shows the way in which right may get predominance over the wrong way.

But before right and wrong can be dilated on, man has to be analysed properly in order to find out what tools he commands and how he applies them. Viewing from this point, it can be easily seen that his three precious instruments are his body, his mind and his speech. His body is responsible for all his actions done through the five *Karmendriyas* or bodily organs. Through speech he gives vent to his feelings, and through his mind he thinks. Body, speech and mind are the lock, stock and barrel of his assets and with these he enjoys infinite possibilities of good and bad.

Out of these three instruments of the human being, the body is the weakest and coarsest weapon. The body is able to reach only a few. With the bodily actions only a few can be benefitted and only a few can be injured, because action has limited applicability. But the most unfortunate part is that most of the serious crimes are committed by the bodily actions. Murders are committed and lives and properties are desecrated. The State however, is able to take cognisance of such crimes as are done by gross bodily actions. Again, there is another aspect of the body which is frequently lost sight of. We should consider the body as a sacred trust, and it behoves us to keep it in a sound and healthy condition. But unfortunately we treat the body and use it so recklessly as if the body is our worst enemy. In fact, we do not trouble the enemy as much as we trouble our body.

The result is that the body is unable to withstand diseases, and it becomes a veritable storehouse of chronic complaints. Therefore, the first principle of the system of Uni-



versal Ethics is that we should preserve the body with care, and use it for good purposes.

The second weapon that humanity is fortunate to possess is the faculty of speech and its application is over a much wider field than that of the first—the body. By speech you can rouse human passions and control human actions. Speech is the light—the morning of the mind. It spreads the beautiful images abroad, which else lie furled and shrouded in the soul. Your speech can be reduced to writing, through which it can influence millions of men. Your speech can be transmitted through broadcasting station and reach all parts of the globe. The speech, therefore, is a much more powerful instrument than the body. By your speech you can cause pleasure or pain in the minds of your listeners. Thus the application of speech is of a very wide range. Offences by speech in only a few instances are taken cognisance of by the State, while others come under the moral law. Therefore, the second principle of Universal Ethics is that the speech of every human being should be pure and good.

Among the three instruments already mentioned, the mind is the most powerful. So great is the domain of the mind over the body, that it for a time can make flesh and nerve impregnable and strengthen the sinews like steel—so that the frail and weak become mighty. It is like the charioteer who keeps the ten horses of bodily organs under control. If the charioteer is weak and bad, all the ten horses are let loose and the result is disaster. If thoughts are bad there is seldom any harmony between the mind, speech and action. If you think in one way, speak in

another way and act in a third way, you are at once discovered as a dangerous person, while the person whose thought, speech and action are the same, is known to be a man of character, and a noble man in whatever sphere of life he may be active. It is only by controlling the mind that you can get infinite possibilities for doing good to others by speech and action. Therefore a good, pure and noble mind is the third principle of Universal Ethics.

Let us see now in what spheres the three instruments of man, namely, the body, speech and mind have their general applicability. Even in this, let us try to analyse a man according to his sphere of action.

For example as soon as a man is born we find him in the midst of a family and the family in a society. Throughout life the person is in one or another society. In other words man is a social animal. He goes on receiving his share of comforts from others. He receives his education from his parents, his superiors, his teachers in the school. He receives his food and clothing from his parents or superiors and these are again supplied to him by the supplier of food-stuff and clothing and other necessities. He, who thus receives benefits of all kinds from the society, it stands to reason, should pay his debt to the society. If, however, that be a high standard and he is unable to pay his debts, let him at least not show his ingratitude by injuring the society.

Then again when a person is born we find him in a geographical unit which is under the protection of some king or some form of government. The person requires protection for his body, his belongings, and property from some organised government.

This protection is given by the king or his government or some such organisation. For running a government there must be a body of laws which may be called the State Laws. No one living under the government can afford to violate these laws either with his body or speech or intentions. Any violation of State Laws are met with punishment or imprisonment or by the imposition of restrictions on his actions, speech and thought. At the same time every individual, living in the state, derives ample benefits from the protection of the State, such as security of his person and property as well as opportunities for carrying on daily avocations or for educating himself and so forth. As such he has a debt to pay to the State, but if that be not possible at least he is expected not to injure the State in return for the advantages received. Here man is shown as a political unit.

Thirdly we find man as an economic unit. Unless absolutely unfit by natural defects, such as blindness, lameness, deafness or dumbness, every man has to earn to maintain himself. He may either produce some goods which he may sell for money, or he may be engaged in some other independent profession, or if he is incapable of that he may work for others and be in service. In this economic field man experiences the greatest troubles. He encounters competitions, antagonisms and antipathies, whenever he begins his work of earning. At the same time, his earnings depend entirely on others from whom he derives his advantages and his profits. A trader cannot earn if he has no buyers, a professional man cannot earn unless he has clients, a servant cannot earn

unless he can get an employer. Thus man as an economic unit is entirely dependent on the good will of others. The conduct of man in this field is mostly guided by moral laws, though of course, many of his actions fall within the category of the State Laws. Here man is shown as an economic unit.

Fourthly, we find every man to be a cultural unit; he belongs to some form of culture whether it is primitive or advanced. He also belongs to some one or the other religion from the animistic type to the highest philosophical type. His actions, speech and thoughts are regulated by cultural traditions peculiar to the country and the people among whom he is born. These are guided mostly by traditional or customary laws which are both ethical and dogmatic or arbitrary in character. The man born as a cultural unit can contribute his share to the sublimation of his culture, or may behave in such a way to bring ridicule on that culture.

These are briefly the four aspects of man's life and provinces in which his body, mind and speech may be in action. Everywhere he has power to violate laws and follow them. In every field he has power to do unlimited harm or to do unlimited good. He, however, must choose well.

Now the question comes as to why man should obey laws, whether Divine or human, whether State or private, whether ethical or religious, whether customary or traditional. He has both the courses open, either to obey or to disobey. This leads us to the important aspect of Universal Ethics or the Law of Harmony. In the universe outside we find the law of harmony at work. The sun rises and sets according to a law,

and the moon does the same. The tides of the sea rise and fall according to the phases of the moon. Man is born, he grows, becomes old and dies according to a definite law of nature. In fact, everything in nature is in tune with certain laws, which in one word may be called Harmony. The reverse of harmony is discord. If one goes against the laws of nature he suffers at once. Over-exposure to the sun causes a headache, over-exposure to cold causes pain in the limbs, over-eating produces digestive troubles, fire causes burns, water drowns and so forth.

If natural laws are violated we see the results immediately. If State Laws are violated, punishment and imprisonment are the results. But with other laws, say, ethical, religious, traditional or social, results are more or less indirect and are not seen so soon as in other cases. The ultimate end of all laws is to produce harmony and avoid discord. If social harmony is broken by any reason he is ostracised. If state harmony is broken he is removed and punished. Similarly, with all laws, if they are broken discord is the result. All discord is unethical. Violent forms of unethical conduct are taken care of by Nature, while others do incalculable injury to the society, religion, the State, trade and culture. It is unethical conduct which makes life almost intolerable and the world almost unfit for all men.

The system of Universal Ethics seeks also to answer questions such as how the body, speech and mind can be regulated in such a way as to produce general harmony. The answer to this question leads us to the ethical standards, or in other words the ethical ideals, to which all actions,

speech and thought should conform. These ideals have been considered by the ancients and their number has been fixed at eight. These are known as the *Atmaguna*—qualities of the individual. These alone are said to be capable of leading an individual to perfection even if he does not formally conform to any human institutions.

In the Gautama Dharmasutra they are enumerated as follows : 1. *Daya* ; wishing well to everyone even as you wish to yourself. 2. *Kshanti* ; patience in respect of internal and external injury. 3. *Anasuya* ; absence of hatred for others. 4. *Saucha* ; purity of body, mind, speech and objects. 5. *Anayasa* ; non-affliction by bodily privations. 6. *Mangalam* ; good deeds. 7. *Akarpanyam* ; absence of despair, and willingness to share with others. 8. *Aspriha* ; contentment and absence of desire for others' belongings.

Every individual should conform to these standards in the application of his three faculties of body, speech and mind. These standards are such that if any individual conforms to them, he will be able to produce the desired harmony in so far as his life is concerned. The individual has to see that none of his actions, words or thoughts are devoid of love, charity, patience and purity. There should be absence of bodily privations, goodness, absence of despair and contentment. These depend entirely on practice, and when he is able to put into practice all the qualities above mentioned, he not only produces harmony, but also leads a perfect life of full realisation of his ideals, which is the ethical conception of *Moksha*. These ethical ideals can be still condensed into three cardinal virtues,

namely, Ahimsa (non-injury) Samyama (restraint) and Seva (service).

Ahimsa or non-injury is stated to be the first ideal or standard to which all thoughts, words and actions should conform in order that they may be called good. Anything contrary to this standard will be bad, unwise and injurious. By our bad thoughts we can injure others, because these will subtly, slowly and surely express themselves through words and actions. Bad words can offend others, give pain to others, and bad actions can injure others both mentally and physically. Therefore, Ahimsa, though negative in character, can be stated to be the first and important of all the three principles.

Samyama or restraint is the second principal of Universal Ethics to which all thoughts, words and actions must conform. Restraint of the ten bodily organs will keep the body in perfect order. Samyama in speech will make the speech gentle, sweet and unoffending. Samyama in thought will keep the mind in a peaceful condition and control the ten bodily organs. This second principle is of positive

character, and continued practice enables an individual to develop it.

Seva or service is the third principle to which all thoughts, words and actions should conform in order to make them good, and all that is good is productive of harmony. This is also a positive principle, and shows the one great purpose for which man has been endowed with the three instruments of body, speech and mind. Every thought is meant to serve someone and serve well, and so with speech and action. If it cannot do anything else, at least it should please someone, benefit someone.

These three principles of Ahimsa, Samyama and Seva cover all the eight qualities of an individual and all the ethical principles enunciated in all religions and in every age. These three principles produce in the best manner the result desired by all, namely, Harmony. He is liberated, he is deemed to have attained perfection whose thoughts and words and actions are in perfect accord with the great Laws of Harmony enunciated in this system of Universal Ethics for the individual, whatever may be his caste, creed or country, or religion and profession.

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## SIVA IN MADURA TEMPLE

*By Prof. K. S. Srikantan, M.A.*

[The various strands of spiritual, mythological and artistic ideals that have supplied the most magnificent background of our temple architecture are a source of perennial delight. With the eye of a reverent critic Mr. Srikantan, Professor of History in Madura College, gives in the following article a delineation of the various Saiva images in the temple at Madura which attracts innumerable pilgrims throughout the year by the impelling power of its spiritual inspiration and sculptural perfection. His brief description of the historic and mythic environments of these living monuments of a dead past cannot fail to kindle interest in the heart of all who could appreciate their immense value.]

**T**HE city of Madura has ever been a stronghold of Saivism. The huge temple measuring 750' by 850' dedicated to God Sundareswara and his consort Goddess Meenakshi is a standing monument to the extraordinary zeal that the ancient citizens of Madura had in the cause of Saiva cult. Several of the stories in the *Thiruvilayadal Puranam* narrate incidents relating to the easy victory of the Saivites over the other religionists. The paintings on the walls around the golden lily tank and inside the temple of Goddess Meenakshi indicate once again the severe persecution of the Sramanas at the hands of the Saivites.

A student of Indian Art has little or no interest in these stories of persecution. His interest on the other hand lies in the numerous sculptural representations of Siva inside the temple rivalling with one another in their magnitude, beauty and form. In this temple is seen almost all the forms of Siva carved with an attention to details, and an adherence to the principles of Agama Sastras rarely seen elsewhere. Though the temple goes after the name of Goddess Meenakshi, Sundareswara portion occupies an area at least twice as much as that occupied by Goddess Meenakshi and the sculptors have

made the portion designed for Siva far more picturesque and elegant. It is even possible that the temple itself was originally meant for Siva and later on was added the shrine of Meenakshi who is fundamentally a South Indian Goddess.

A sudden wave of enthusiasm might have sprung up in favour of the Goddess which might have eclipsed the position of the God. Such transformations are not strange to students of Indian sculpture and architecture. In fact, according to one tradition, the temple originally belonged to Perumal (Maha Vishnu who was later superseded by Siva). Though Siva has numerous forms, the chief form in which Siva is worshipped is that of a Linga. It is in this form Siva is worshipped in the Madura temple. All the other forms of Siva occupy a subordinate place. It is no wonder this is so, for Linga worship appears to have been an earliest form of worship in South India tracing its origin to the popular Phallic cult. It is easy to see in this form the symbols of *Linga* and *Yoni*. Thus inside the sanctum we see God Sundareswara in the form of Prajapati. The shrine in which the Linga is placed is a small but beautiful one. It has a Vimana above supported by the famous Ashta Dig Gajas. (The eight mythical ele-

phants supposed to support the earth at the eight points of the compass.) Inside the temple one can see numerous Lingas scattered here and there. It was the custom years back for pilgrims returning from Benares to bring with them such Lingas and offer them to these temples along with enough endowment to meet the cost of their daily worship. We have among these one Linga representing Kasi Viswanatha to which a separate shrine has been dedicated near the shrine of Goddess Meenakshi. Close by Kasi Viswanatha's shrine is the shrine of Javandeeswara, again another Linga, which is now in ruins. It is quite likely that in centuries gone by, when the temple was small, this was the principal shrine of Siva. No estimate of the sculptor's talents can be made by looking at the Lingas, for they are not only uniform but were too easy to require any special skill. We therefore pass on to the other anthropomorphic forms of Siva.

According to the Agama Sastras the anthropomorphic forms of Siva are too numerous to mention. The forms that are found in the Madura temple can be classified under the following heads :—Anugraha Murthi, Yoga Murthi, Santa Murthi, Nritta Murthi and Samhara Murthi (the poses of blessing, meditation, serenity, dancing and destruction). Besides these there are several other forms of Siva which will be noticed in due course.

As Anugraha Murthi, Siva is represented as conferring a boon upon his devotees in appreciation of their transparent sincerity in devotion and severe austerities. In the *Kambattadi Mandapam*, we have two remarkable examples of Anugraha Murthi. One is the figure of Siva conferring a boon to Mahavishnu carved on one of the

pillars at the western end of the *Kambattadi Mantapam* facing south. We see in this pillar Siva and Parvati seated on a Bhadrasana. Siva has his right leg hanging down. He has four arms, the upper two as usual carry the axe and the deer ; the right lower arm is in the act of presenting a *chakra* (wheel) to Mahavishnu who is standing at the feet of Siva with all devotion and submission. The left hand shows Abhaya (pose granting fearlessness). Seated to the left of Siva is Parvati with two hands, the left resting on the thigh and the right hand in the *Vismaya* (marvel) pose. Vishnu who is made to look like a boy to suit the motif of the sculpture is seen almost touching the left foot of Siva while Siva is just presenting the 'wheel'. The 'wheel' has almost left Siva's right hand. It is easy to discover different feelings in the faces of the three figures. To appreciate the skill of the sculptor one should know the story which is here translated in stone. Once upon a time, so goes the legend, Vishnu finding himself unable to conquer certain Asuras prayed to Siva for the grant of the all-powerful *Chakra*. To please the Lord of Kailasa, Vishnu performed Puja by offering one thousand lotus flowers every day. One day while Maha Vishnu was worshipping he found to his astonishment that one of the flowers was missing. Maha Vishnu, of course, did not know that this was only an experiment of Siva to test his devotion. Unable to face the disappointment he plucked one of his own eyes and offered the same at the feet of Siva. Siva who was mightily pleased offered the *Chakra*. The carvings on the pillar tell this beautiful story much better than words. The sculptor has enabled

the pilgrim to see suppressed smile in the face of Siva, devotion in the eyes of Vishnu and solemnity in that of Parvati. Another example of Anugraha Murthi is to be seen in the same *Mandap* where Siva is seen blessing his staunch devotee Chandikeswara.

Here we see Siva seated in Sukhasana posture on a raised pedestal. His left leg is hanging down and resting on a foot stool. The Goddess is seated to the left of Siva on the same pedestal, Her right leg being bent at the knee and placed on the pedestal while the left is hanging down to rest on another foot stool. Siva as usual is seen having four arms. In his back hands he holds the axe and the deer and with the front two arms he is seen decorating with a flower garland the locks of his servant, the devoted Chandesa, who is seen standing devotedly at his feet. In agreement with the rules of the Agama Sastras Chandesa is bedecked with the ornaments of children. According to *Kasyapa Silpa*, "Next to Dakshinamurthi the figure of Chandikeswara is the most famous." The story behind this sculpture is a most fascinating one. Vicharasarman was the original name of the now famous Chandikeswara. Though a Brahmin by birth he took to the profession of a cowherd, thanks to his extraordinary devotion to those animals which were often times subjected to cruel treatment by the ordinary cowherds. From the day of his assuming charge, the cows became happy and began to yield much more milk than their udders could hold. The extra milk began to flow out. The new cowherd unable to see this huge waste of that precious god-given milk collected together all the

milk and poured it on the heads of Lingas set up by him for that purpose. The old cowherds who lost their positions on account of Vicharasarman took advantage of this and began to fabricate all sorts of stories against this Brahmin boy. They said that he was wantonly milking the cows and pouring the same on mud. Yajnadatta, the father of Vicharasarman, on hearing the report proceeded to the grazing ground to examine the truth of the allegations. To his surprise he found his son was wasting the milk as represented by the wicked cowherds. He immediately kicked the Linga. The boy not knowing who exactly it was that kicked the Linga, in a fit of extreme devotion cut off the leg of the father. Siva was extremely pleased to note the strange devotion and appeared on the scene with his consort Parvati and offered him his grace. We see Chandesa with his hands folded in the *anjali* (palms folded erectly in front) pose standing on a *padmasana* (carved lotus used as a pedestal) in front of Siva. We have in Ravananugrahamurthi another type of Siva in his boon-giving form. It is impossible to exaggerate the beauty of this wonderful relief on the western pillar. Here we see Ravana with his ten heads and twenty arms under the Kailasa Mountain playing on his lute, the melodious Samaveda. Ravana, the king of Lanka in one of his fanciful moods took it into his head to carry the Mount Kailasa to his capital Lanka where he wanted to set it up as a pillar of victory. When the mountain was thus lifted a great confusion resulted among the dwellers of the mountain. The *Ganas* (Siva's hosts) were shocked and Parvati embraced Siva in fear. Parameswara

divined the situation and pressed the hill with his left toe and the audacious giant was caught under the weight. It was only after years of weary penance that Ravana was released. This most exquisite sculpture recalls to our mind in a manner at once graphic and familiar one of the most popular stories in Hindu Mythology. The natural proportions of each figure, the solemnity in the face of Siva and a great realism in the moulding of the figure of Ravana and the expressive eyes of this monarch of Ceylon cannot escape the attention of even a casual visitor. When the Kailasa mountain was shaken there was a thrill among all the dwellers on the lofty peaks of the mountain. The sculptor has even shown this in a most remarkable way. The kneeling posture given to Ravana

easily suggests the strength of this mighty ruler.

Siva in his Yogic attitude always goes by the name of Dakshinamurthi. Among the several images in the South Indian Temple, easily the most popular is Dakshinamurthi. In this temple we have more than three representations of this form. All these represent the God as a youthful boy engaged at once in meditating and teaching. The remarkable figures are seen almost opposite to each other in *Kambattadi Mandapam*. In one figure we see the God with his right leg bent at the knee vertically and placed on the demon Apasmara while the left is bent across so as to rest upon the right thigh. The right forearm of this image symbolises Gnana-mudra. The back left hand carries a bundle of manuscripts.

(To be continued)

## THE MESSAGE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

[We give below the substance of two of the addresses delivered at Madras during the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary celebrations, a short report of which was published in the last issue of the *Vedanta Kesari*. The first part of the essay is a summary of the lecture of Mr. M. R. Jayakar, M.A., Bar-at-Law, Bombay, and the second, of Mr. A. R. Wadia, M.A., Bar-at-Law, Professor of Philosophy in the Mysore University.]

### I

#### SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

**I**T was indeed a miracle that in spite of political subjection, Indian spirituality was not dead, and that she could give birth to a great world teacher in modern times. It was indeed a miracle that that saint was worshipped in spite of war, bloodshed and hatred, in far and distant lands. What was the secret of the message of Sri Ramakrishna? One who looked at the early life of the sage would find very little there to

indicate that he was developing into a great spiritual master. He displayed a spirit of 'rebelliousness' on the occasion of his *Moonja* ceremony, when he refused to go to the most illustrious Brahmin lady who was present and say, *Bhavati Bhiksham Dehi*, as was the custom, but sought the village blacksmith's wife and insisted on having his spiritual *bhiksha* from her.

It was surprising, the way Sri Ramakrishna looked at religion.



Religion, he considered, should be viewed from three aspects,—the conception of a human being, one's relation to one's fellowmen, and one's relation to God. In regard to these, Sri Ramakrishna made a great departure, not from the essence of Hindu religion, but certainly from the course followed by his predecessors. He put up a bold claim—the boldest ever put forward since the days of the Upanishads—for all human beings that every one of them had potential Divinity in him or her, that one's contact with that Divinity was inseparable, however, low, vile or depraved the individual might be, and that everyone of them was a sacred abode of God. Among his disciples were men and women of all kinds, and sometimes he was attacked for being "too partial to profligates and prostitutes"! The most degraded, when they entered his presence became different. His place was open to every one, people of all creeds and schools of thoughts. He left neither of the indicia of godliness so common with modern saints—a book of revelation and hierarchy with a mental livery, though not a physical one. But he left a great storehouse of spiritual energy; he left behind tremendous impulses. Sri Ramakrishna's conception of the relation of man to the rest of the world was simple. It was the establishment of a happy co-ordination between the physical impulses of human beings, their failings and even vices, with the spirituality latent in them, and bringing them into co-relation with the rest of the world.

Sri Ramakrishna's conception of religion did not consist in mere faith in the divinity, belief in certain *Apta Vakya* or *Pramana* where reason end-

ed, but in seeing and coming into contact with God. *Apta Vakya* and *Pramana* he threw aside saying "My religion is not that kind of religion; my religion is this: one must contact God in one's personal life. If the religion which you teach or which I am going to teach only produces faith in God, that is not religion at all. My religion is that which will make one see God." Swami Vivekananda went from sage to sage—Bengal was so full of these—asking if any of them had seen God and could show God to him. None was able to give him a satisfactory answer. He asked two questions and to neither he got a satisfactory answer. He listened to their discourses; he admired the phraseology of their dialectics; but his doubts were not cleared. Narendranath turned away from them saying, "What is the good of it unless you have seen God yourself?" One day he came to Sri Ramakrishna and got his answer. The Paramahansa touched young Narendranath's spiritual cord, and the latter went into Samadhi, and then descended into the world having sensed God. Miracles such as these were rare.

Sri Ramakrishna derived his inspiration from nature. He did not read books. He used to go to a *Smashana* (burial ground) for quite contemplation and spiritual experience. He made his body a machine responsive to the surrounding nature. Sri Ramakrishna was told that the love of Gopis for Sri Krishna was purely spiritual. Wishing to experience it, he went about dressing, living and feeling like a woman, and in course of time he realised the truth underlying the Krishna-Gopika story. Sri Ramakrishna heard of Christ and contemplated on the teachings of

Christ, and he had a vision of Christ living. In his aphorisms, one would find Christ placed on the same footing as Rama or Krishna or Sankaracharya. To complete his spiritual experiences, he got a teacher of Islam to initiate him into the mysteries of Islam, and in course of time Sri Ramakrishna sensed Islam also.

Sri Ramakrishna's conception of religion was very different indeed from the conception of many Sadhus who preceded him. His conception was to see and contact God, to sense Him every day and to see that He was our daily inspiration.

Sri Ramakrishna was the one saint of modern times who had sensed all the three great religions together—Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. He might be taken to be typical of what the future Indian religion might be, if Indians were only alert. The experiment which they were beginning that year in the political field was a process of nation-welding and nation-building. Analogous to that, perhaps a counter part of that, process there would be one in the sphere of religion. In course of time, the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, in so far as they embodied a co-relation of these three great religions of India, would prevail if the votaries of the two militant Semitic religions—Semitic in their origin—Islam and Christianity, allowed the process of assimilation to go on uninterrupted. Conversions were an arresting of that process and an insult to that process. When people sat together in a legislature, a kind of fraternity would grow, notwithstanding "the arrogance of some political parties", and that fraternity would extend to spheres outside politics. It was their duty to help such a process and not to give

it a violent shock by any act of aggression. Sri Ramakrishna had taught them that conversions had no place in religion, for one religion was as good as any other; it was not the faith that mattered; it was the sensing of God that was the essence of religion.

We must all be willing instruments where one religion unconsciously and gradually influenced another. One who read the output of literature from year to year in Christianity and Islam would find that Sri Ramakrishna laid the foundations true when he said he realised God in all those religions. The wonderful part of it was that the experiences recorded by those Islamic and Christian students showed that they felt that in Sri Ramakrishna they found the greatest embodiment of the teachings of their particular religion. Who could know the purpose of God in bringing these three religions together in India? Was it not extraordinary that two militant religions throve side by side with Hinduism? It was God's plan to permeate Hinduism with the virile truths of the other two faiths, and in turn make them absorb the tolerance of the other. This process began with Sri Ramakrishna, and it was for us to complete it.

One of the greatest conceptions that Sri Ramakrishna left behind was that of God as the Mother. The conception had been there before him, but no one had brought it out so vividly as Sri Ramakrishna did. It was a conception which Christianity was gradually absorbing. Sri Ramakrishna sublimated his love for his wife into love for the Mother. He turned to his wife with the greatest kindness and asked her to appear before him in her best dress and

bedecked with all ornaments. He put her on a pedestal and fell at her feet and worshipped her. At the age of nineteen she then was in, it was difficult for divinity to illumine an individual. Sri Ramakrishna touched her, and his touch turned her into a saint and marital love into spiritual love.

When Sri Ramakrishna passed away, he left behind Swami Vivekananda—a host in himself—and the Ramakrishna Mission. There in Madras the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda had taken abode. Madras had conserved the spirit of India's ancient civilisation and culture. Madras gave India the great saint who reconciled the cravings of man for a personal God with the ideal of Brahman. Madras had kept that tradition pure. The speaker desired that the tradition should continue, pure and unadulterated. They might change anything—mental outfit, habits and apparel—but the inside should be truly Hindu; for what really mattered depended on the inside.

## II

### SANNYAS AS SERVICE

In Sri Ramakrishna we did not find a mere dreamer, not a mere visionary, not one who was sunk in his spiritual pride that he loathed any contact with this world of imperfections, but a genuine Karma Yogi, a man who was very sincerely touched to the very depths of his heart by human suffering and who felt he could do something to relieve that suffering and to guide man to the path of peace and good will.

In the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna there were three things most appealing. First was the

catholicity of his teachings. He had room for all, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Mohammedans, and he did not call upon any one of those to give up their spiritual heritage. He did not stand out as a new prophet or as a founder of a new religion. He only reaffirmed the old truths preached by the founders of the great religions of the world. Sri Ramakrishna believed that the essentials of all the great religions of the world needed re-assertion so that their truths might not be lost to mankind. He gave a new form to the old truths found in the great religions, which would appeal to mankind in the 19th and 20th centuries. The second feature was the emphasis on activity and service. Ramakrishna Paramahansa did not look upon life as something contaminating. On the contrary he believed in contact with the world. While Indian sages of old shrank within themselves and avoided contact with the world, he literally hankered to serve mankind. He was a sage, who having attained the highest bliss and having realised God, still yearned for kinship with his fellow-beings, and it was that kinship that had made his name famous in the history of humanity. The continuation of this spirit was to be found in the Mission bearing his name.

Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda happened to be a marvellous combination. It was difficult to conceive either doing what he did without the other.

Sri Ramakrishna's message lives in his Mission, the Ramakrishna Mission, the new Order he created. The spirit of service was imbedded in the members of the Order, and it had found educational institutions where the education imparted was not of the

stereotyped old fashion, but an education in which there was something new, deep-based on the moral and religious foundations of life, and yet an education, vocational in character with culture as its basis, which suited the different sides of human life. In his Order there was a desire to develop mind and character, not for the selfish purpose of attaining salvation for one-self, but to fit them for the great ideal of service, which Rama-

krishna had laid down in his life and Vivekananda had made the central point of the organisation.

India had always abounded in sages, sages so great that they forgot life. But in the Sri Ramakrishna Mission, they found the spirit of service, of action and of catholicity, living in full bloom. So long as the spirit of the founder lived, so long was there hope for India and for them all.

## NEWS AND VIEWS

### Instruction in the Pupils' Own Tongue

The recent convocation address delivered by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore at the Calcutta University, in Bengali, for the first time diverting from the usual custom of delivering it in English, has attracted considerable attention in all quarters. In the course of the address, the poet criticised the use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction in the following words :

"In no country in the world, except India, is to be seen this divorce of the language of instruction from the language of the pupil. .... We had allowed ourselves too complacently to become reconciled to be thus slighted by the dispensers of our fate, to acquiesce in this belittling of the masses of our people, consoled by the scanty helps of learning, parsimoniously served to the few occupying the front seats, called 'educating the people of India.' We had lost the courage even to imagine a broader system of education venturing beyond the bounds of such triviality, just as a Bedouin cannot dream that Providence will ever allow him to share in the expansive fruitfulness outside the few scattered cases of his desert home land. .... These universities of ours have touched no more than the outermost fringe of the great mass, and even that contact is of the

lightest, bereft as it is of all vitality in passing through its foreign covering. Wherefore far behind the other Eastern nation in which the call to awake has been heard, lags India in regard to self-respect awakened in the light of self-knowledge.

The difference between the uneducated and the educated sections of our countrymen is exactly like that between the Sahara and the tiny oases that dot its vast expanse, both in quantity and quality. For this reason though we are under one political domination, we are not governed by the same mentality. Of late in Japan, Persia, Arabia, Turkey, everywhere amongst the Eastern peoples, measures have been taken to get rid of this internal source of division leading to futility of national aspiration everywhere, save in this unfortunate land.

We know of parasite creatures in the animal world, which live and die in utter dependance on their hosts. They are able to eke out a bare living, but are for ever crippled in the development of their limbs and organs. Such has been the case with our modern university education. It has from its inception been parasitic on a foreign tongue, so that, though nourishment has not been altogether lacking, it has been obtained at the cost of all-round development—so much so that it has even ceased to be sensible of its own abortiveness. Accustomed to live by borrowing, it has come to measure attainment by largeness of debt; it has signed a bond of servitude to the

thinkers of other lands. Those who receive such education cannot produce what they consume. Brought up to absorb the thoughts of others, their academic success depends on their ability to repeat by rote, and their own faculty of thought, their courage of conviction, their creative inspiration, have all been enfeebled. It goes without saying that the only way of revival from such chronic debility is by the assimilation and application of the subject matter of education through one's own language, just as, in order to incorporate food-stuffs into the body, they have to be chewed with one's own teeth and saturated with one's own digestive juices."

### **We have yet to learn from the West**

Dr. Tagore is not hesitant to recognise the great cultural gift we are to share gratefully with the West. For this English language will have to be given a place of honour in the future too. He continues :

"We cannot but admit that the present age is dominated by the civilisation of Europe. This age has presented a background of strenuous endeavour to all the world, on which the thoughts and deeds of men are appearing in ever-new variety of form, and are spreading as a unifying influence over the whole of the civilised world. It would not have been possible for the science and literature, history, economics and politics, the technique of research and of the testing of truth, born on the soil of Europe, thus to permeate the world, had they not stood the test of experimental application, had the mind of Europe not won universal recognition by reason of the honesty and earnestness of its striving, impelling all the newly awakened countries to adopt the same studies, the same methods, the same attitude of mind.

Europe has provided the world with the gifts of a great culture—had it not the power to do so, it would never have attained its supremacy. It has given the example of dauntless courage, ungrudging self-sacrifice, it has shown tireless energy in the acquisition and spread of knowledge, in the making of institutions for human welfare.

Even in these days of self-abasement there are still before us its true representatives who are ready to suffer punishment in

their fearless protest against its iniquities, in their chivalrous championship of its victims. They may be defeated again and again, for the time yet in them is to be seen the true ideal of their civilisation. The inspiration that holds them steadfast to their best instincts, through all the outrage and degeneracy around them—that inspiration is the truth dwelling in the heart of Western civilisation. It is from that we have to learn, not from the disastrous self-degradation of the modern Western nations.

Of course it will not do to forget that the English language cannot lose a place of honour in Indian Universities, not merely because of its practical usefulness as a means of livelihood, but because it is the vehicle of the Western science which to-day has earned the respect of all the world. To repudiate it out of a sense of false patriotism would only be to curtail our own opportunities. This science is not only important in the field of world economics and politics as a means of self-preservation, but its influence is of immense value for freeing the mind from the inertia of stupidity. The mind which refuses to admit its message, which is unable to accept its implications, must needs be content with a narrow, dark and feeble life. From whatever horizon the light of knowledge may radiate, it is only a clouded, barbaric mind that rejects it because of its unfamiliarity. All races and peoples are equally entitled to avail themselves of Truth in any of its manifestations, for this is a right inherent in humanity itself."

### **Toleration—Our Greatest Contribution**

Under the V. S. Srinivasa Sastri Endowment Scheme, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer delivered a brilliant series of lectures on "Indian Political Theories" from February 11th at the Madras University Examination Hall. He concluded the lectures with the following remarkable utterance on the Hindu ideal of toleration :

"The greatest contribution to posterity made by the Hindu tradition was the broad-mindedness of sympathy and the toleration of different view-points exhi-

bited almost alone in India amongst the civilised communities of the earlier days. When Egypt persecuted and hounded out the Jews, when racial and communal conflicts disfigured the history of Babylon and Nineveh, when, later on, we see that the slave States in Greece and Rome formed the basis of marvellous cultures and when, in the medieval ages the baiting of Jews alternated with the baiting of Roman Catholics by Protestants and *vice versa*, we had the spectacle in India of unflinching hospitality to foreign religion and foreign cultures. It would be unfair and inaccurate not to mention that the Buddhists and Jains suffered many pains and penalties especially in the south of India, but which country can show anything like the treatment of Parsis who, flying from oppression in their own country of Persia, asked for and obtained their succour of the wise West Coast King to whose protection and active encouragement of their faith and tradition, the Parsis ultimately owe their dominant position in India to-day? Which country can furnish a parallel to what happened in Travancore under the rule of an extremely conservative and religiously-minded monarch? From the days when Christian congregations were split into innumerable and warring factions, the Chera Kings of Travancore gave whole-hearted welcome to the followers of the Eastern Church whose Patriarch of Antioch now boasts of a larger following in Malabar than perhaps anywhere else in the world? Which king outside India has surpassed the monarchs of Travancore and Malabar who conferred sacerdotal honours, presents, lands and dignities on the monasteries, bishops and archbishops of the Christian Church, with the result that to-day the largest Christian population in India is found in the State of Travancore? Which ruler in the world's chequered history has mentioned, in more moving and powerful language than is found in the edicts of Asoka the Great, the principles of tolerance and comprehension of differing creeds and ideals co-existing with a spiritual urge towards the consolidation and regeneration of the ruler's own faith? Such have been the marks and characteristics of Indian civilisation, not only at its peak points, but through the centuries until recently. \* \* \*

Can this instinct for universality, this understanding of all points of view and the feel-

ing that the realisation of the Supreme must connote a sympathy with and a reconciliation of many forms of thought and beliefs, be better expressed than in the words of Thayumanavar in his hymn to Parvati, the meaning of which is this: "The light and bliss of supreme knowledge envelops and absorbs all forms of belief and thought as the ocean absorbs all rivers." May this spirit of concord animate our social and political life in the exacting years ahead of us."

### Physical Culture and Physical Education

Professor D. S. Gordon of the Mysore University, in the course of a recent lecture, made the following distinction between gymnastics and physical culture on the one hand, and physical education on the other:

"The one cultivates the body, but the other looks beyond the body and aims at developing certain qualities of the head and heart. The latter has a wider implication and involves the inculcation of mental qualities such as team-spirit and fair play. Perhaps the modern English phrase 'to be a sport' contains the essence of the whole matter. To be a sport is to look upon life as an interesting adventure in which one has to do one's best, and take the good and bad as they come without being unduly cast down by misfortune. Moreover, one who is a 'good sport' regards his fellow men as partners in life's adventures and refuses to take a mean advantage over them. Physical education comprehends all these things; it means not merely the turning out of youths strong in body but the implanting of a new outlook upon life."

Adverting to the Greek and Hindu ideals he pointed out:

"To the ancient Greek body was a temple; he kept it clean and strong and beautiful. While Greeks admired courage and physical strength they never gloried in mere brute force. Behind bodily culture and beyond it they always held up ideals of nobility of mind and beauty of form.... the Hindu sages.... by not giving loose rein to unwholesome desires and keeping the body under strict control

they really found out the secret of good health."

We would safely assert that the Greek and Hindu ideals are complementary. The aesthetic pursuit of the one, without the self-controlled calmness of the other is aimless. Beauty without virtue is a curse.

### Value of Myth and Folk-tale

Evelyn Sharp writes in the *Manchester Guardian* :

"Myth and folk-tale are at the very foundation of our human understanding of one another, and to grow up with no knowledge of either until habits of thought are formed and prejudices have begun to poison reason, is to lack a valuable weapon against the kind of cynical disillusionment that threatens modern youth when it has been nurtured solely on scientific facts. Parents who fear that truth will suffer in the mind of the child who is given fairy tales and nonsense verse to read appear to me to have little faith in the power of truth, or the faculty of the child for discerning eternal wisdom whenever he may chance upon it."

Even sophisticated modernists need not fight shy to put into the hands of their children properly written Puranic stories that are full of might magnificence and heroism.

### Vicissitude in Reading Habit

The University Library of Madras has a collection of about 100,000 books to which an addition of 4,000 books are made yearly. Recently the library has been shifted to a palatial building with every one of the up-to-date conveniences for the readers. Observing the facts indicated by the statistics at the end of December last, the Librarian writes :

"The greatest increase in the use of books is in religion (50 per cent) and in psychology (40 per cent.). History came next in order with 30 per cent."

Although it is rash to generalise from this, since this data is changing and inadequate, we may venture to say that there is a wider interest noticeable in religion in India as evinced by such and other facts.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**The Mandukyopanishad : With the texts of the Upanishad and Gaudapada's Karika in Devanagari together with the English translation of these and of Sankara's commentary on them. Translated by Swami Nikhilananda of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Vedanta Centre, New York. Published by Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore. (Copies can be had at Vedanta Kesari Office, Brodies Road, Mylapore, Madras.) Price Rs. 2-8-0. Pp. XLIII + 361.**

Students of Vedanta know very well of the Mandukya Upanishad which is considered the briefest as well as the profoundest of that class of literature. The Karika of Gaudapada on the Upanishad elaborates the doctrine set forth in an aphoristic form in the scriptural text, and Sankara's Commentary on both the Upani-

shad and the Karika gives a dialectical exposition of the subject.

The speciality of the Mandukya and the literature centering round it consists in the fact that they clearly enunciate one of the several methods of Vedantic approach to Reality, namely, the method of arriving at the ultimate Truth through an analysis of the three states of consciousness known as waking, dream and sleep. All other philosophies and theologies take only the waking consciousness of man into consideration, and neglect the other two states which in fact occupy more or less the same length of his short span of life as waking. This gives to the Mandukyopanishad a uniqueness that is all its own in the mystical and philosophical literature of the world.

The other special philosophical merit of the work is thus described by the learned translator in his Preface: "It is only Gaudapada that has successfully demonstrated in his *Karika* that the non-dual Atman declared in the Upanishad as the Ultimate Reality is not a theological dogma and that it does not depend upon the mystic experiences of the Yogis; but that it is a metaphysical truth which satisfies the demands of universal tests and which is based upon reason independent of scriptural authority."

The value of the present volume is enhanced by profuse Notes and an elaborate Preface from the pen of the learned translator and by an interesting forward by Mr. V. Subramanya Iyer, the veteran Vedantist of Mysore. The printing and get-up of the book come to a very high standard of excellence. Every earnest student of Vedanta will find this volume useful both from the spiritual and intellectual points of view.

**Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines (or Seven Books of Wisdom of the Great Path) according to the late Lama Kazi Dawa Sandup's English rendering. Arranged and edited with Introduction and Annotations to serve as a Commentary by W. Y. Evans-Wentz, M.A., D.Litt., D.Sc., Jesus College, Oxford. Oxford University Press. Price 16 sh. Pp. XXIV + 339.**

This volume forms the third and last of a series of Tibetan Studies, the first two volumes being *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* and *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa*. Although the seven books comprising this volume do not exhibit any uniformity in their authorship and age of production, they have been arranged in a definite order of sequence. All schools of spiritual discipline invariably insist upon the necessity of moral perfection as the first condition for entrance into the inner sanctuary of the Spiritual. Accordingly here too the first book named *The Supreme Path of Discipleship* (The Precepts of the Gurus) presents a rosary of moral and spiritual sayings that breath the same spirit as that of the Dhammapada, Marcus Aurelius' Meditations and the Imitations of Christ. This compilation, arranged in twenty-eight categories came to existence in the 12th Century A.D. The insistent note of these

sayings is the ideal of world renunciation and selfless aeon-long labour looking to the ultimate enlightenment of every sentient being. "Unless the mind be trained to selflessness and infinite compassion", runs one of the precepts, "one is apt to fall into the error of seeking liberation for self alone." Among others the signs of a superior man are set forth in the following: "To have but few desires and satisfactions is the sign of a superior man: To be lacking in hypocrisy and deceit is the sign of a superior man. To be faithful to one's engagements and obligations is the sign of a superior man. To be able to keep alive friendship while one (at the same time) regardeth all beings with impartiality is the sign of a superior man. To allow unto others the victory, taking unto oneself the defeat, is the sign of a superior man. To observe faithfully and without pride one's vows of chastity and piety is the sign of a superior man." There is a great deal of truth in saying, as tradition would have for it, that these immaculate words of the Great Gurus endowed with Divine wisdom have the power to radiate it.

The second book entitled *The Yoga of the Great Symbol* contains the quintessence of some of the most profound doctrines handed down from the middle ages to our own century through an unbroken succession of initiates. This work, for the first time rendered into English completely, says the learned Editor, is a remarkable gift of the East to the West. The nature of mind and reality forms the central idea of this book. There are several helpful suggestions in it which the Yogi attempting to tranquillise the mind may advantageously adopt. There is much herein resembling Vedantic metaphysics and spiritual practices. The warning goes: "Regard not the Void as being Nothingness"—as the Southern Buddhists would hold it. The unenlightened alone regard it as being nothingness, since it cannot be described in terms of phenomenal experience. Realisation of the supermundane consciousness alone could give knowledge of reality. "Mind-made goals, however noble, end in disillusionment. And the mind-transcending Thatness cannot thus be called a goal; for it is a realisation of what already is." The essence of the practice prescribed for the attainment of this state



of liberation is the art of recognising the thoughts, whereby one acquires understanding of the inseparable nature of mind and thought. A concomitant of this state of Liberation (which may be compared with the Hindu conception of Jivanmukti) is the uprush of great compassion for all those sentient beings who have not yet recognised the true nature of their own mind. In the words of Dr. Wentz, "The Yogi from the impartial, impersonal, disinterested standpoint of the cosmic mind, analyses mind in its human aspect. The macrocosmic measures the microcosmic. Then arises great compassion...." The microcosmic mind is but a reflex of that macrocosmic Mind in which all things are in at-one-ment. Although from our view-point the mind is a complex compound of various sensations, perceptions, reasonings and memories, from the view-point of the illuminated mind it is only the Void or the One Mind, called the Great Symbol. This Sunya or Void is not "a state of non-entity or nihilism nor a state of individualized being, but something apart from both states, a condition of existence indescribable in any known terms of language, for language is dependent upon concepts derived from experiences in a sensuous universe, and reality is non-sensuous." The text instructs: "By means of the simile of sleep and dreams, recognize all phenomena to be mind. By means of the simile of water and ice, recognise noumena and phenomena to be a unity. By means of the simile of water and ice, recognise noumena and phenomena to be a unity. By means of the simile of water and waves transmute all things to the one common state of at-one-ment."

Coming to the practical discipline, the emphasis on self-effort is always pronounced. Significant is the saying of Saraha, "Since all things are born of the mind, therefore is the mind itself the *Guru*." Each aspirant for Nirvanic Enlightenment must be a law unto himself; he himself, not the Guru, must tread the Path.... the Buddha taught, each pilgrim of the Great Pilgrimage must really be his own light and his own refuge. Nirvana is to be realized

not by proxy of a Guru but by the Yogi himself." This text advises to clear away the impediments arising from noumena by the knowledge of the Oneness of the noumena and phenomena. It also closes with the warning that all egotistical dogmatism is detrimental to the attainment of truth. It is a going astray and a sealing of the mind. It could be overcome only by meditating on the voidness as compassion, for that alone effectively cuts away feelings such as, "I shall never come back to earth again," etc.

The contents of the third and the fourth books are mostly Tantric in nature, particularly that part of it concerning visualisations and meditations. Books five and six deal with the yogic method of attaining the mental state of non-ego and the doctrine of the five wisdoms respectively. The seventh and the last book deals with meditation and realisation. These chapters are of great importance to the student of occultism especially. The book on the whole is a mine of information equally welcome to the student of Yoga as well as to the general reader interested in philosophy and anthropology. The Editor's comments are ample and illuminating. There is a very comprehensive introduction in the beginning elucidating various points of interest connected with Yoga. The literary and historical Introduction given at the beginning of each book is equally useful. Apart from the distinguished academic qualifications and long, patient, scholarly labour expended in the production of these volumes, Dr. Evans-Wentz has made it equally welcome to the layman as well as the exacting scholar by bringing to bear upon it the orally transmitted knowledge which he was able to acquire about Tibetan Yoga by placing himself under the guidance of Lama Kasi Dawa Sandup, a lenial representative of the hoary Kargyupta School of Mahayanism. We are impressed by the sympathetic approach, scientific spirit and scholarly outlook of this significant volume, and we hope the work will find a respectable place in every important library.

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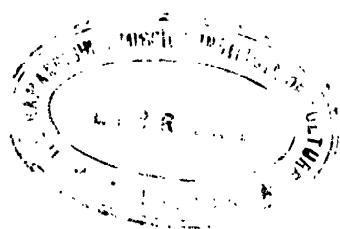
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